

100 irrefutable proofs

Muhammad ﷺ is
the prophet of God

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Translated from French

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Preface

This book is born out of a simple idea which, in turn, is based on the conviction that Muhammad is indeed a prophet, the last of a series of Semitic prophets, descendants of Abraham. Thus, there are necessarily evidences to attest to the authenticity of his mission. The purpose of this book is to make a non-exhaustive inventory of such evidences, since, as is clear from the title, we have chosen 100 pieces of evidence which, taken together, constitute a bundle of truths that only a narrow-minded person could reject. These proofs, which for the sake of clarity, are not mentioned in the text but rather summarized at the end of the book, are of two kinds:

First type: scriptural proofs

The revealed books cannot fail to mention the Prophet Muhammad, founder of what has become the world's first religion and an empire that changed the face of the world. Naturally, the Koran confirms the authenticity of his mission as it refers to him as "the Prophet" or, even more so, as "the Envoy of God". The Most High says: "Muhammad is no more than a messenger; other messengers have gone before him."¹ But non-Muslims do not admit that the Koran is a revealed book, because if they do, they would be Muslims. There remain the Judeo-Christian Scriptures which, in several respects, more or less explicitly, announce his coming. How could it be otherwise? How could such a momentous event in the history of humanity have been passed over in silence by the biblical prophets who announced and mentioned far less important events? The first part of this book, entitled *The announced Prophet*, is therefore devoted to these announcements which are always present in both the New and Old Testaments.

¹ Koran 3, 144.

Second type: rational proofs

Scriptural proofs, drawn from books revealed before the advent of the prophet Muhammad, will probably not be enough to convince the most Cartesian minds who accept only the most rational evidence, although the announcement of the advent of Muhammad in the Jewish-Christian Scriptures is in itself a very rational proof of his sincerity. The hard core of this book is therefore made up of these rational proofs which, taken as a whole, unambiguously demonstrate the authenticity of the mission of the Envoy of God and the divine origin of the Koran, proofs we have classified into four categories corresponding to the second, third, fourth and fifth parts of this book.

First category: announcements of a prophet.

What indeed distinguishes a false prophet from a true one is the authenticity of the latter's prophecies. The Old Testament states that "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken."²

Second category: the teachings of a prophet

How, in fact, could an illiterate Arab of the 7th century come up with a message that affected so deeply societies and individuals, a message well-coordinated and free of contradictions and which, unlike the Bible, does not conflict with reason, nor with History, nor with modern scientific facts?

Third category: the achievements of a prophet.

How to explain that a group of persecuted believers in Makkah, forced to hide in order to pray, could have become in a few decades

² Deuteronomy 18, 22.

that nation that conquered the world? And how could the Lord have admitted the triumph of Islam, which is growing stronger from century to century, if Muhammad had been a false prophet?

Fourth category: the characteristics of a prophet

We will show in this chapter that none of the characteristics of a false prophet is found in Muhammad who, on the contrary, possesses all the qualities of a prophet of the lineage of the Semitic prophets, descendants of Abraham.



Part One

The Announced Prophet

Introduction

There is no doubt that the Scriptures announced the advent of this prophet who changed the course of history, either to warn men against his coming if he was a false prophet, or to venerate him and command them to follow him, if he was really sent by the Lord. The fact is that if the biblical prophets had warned men against his coming, these texts would have been used by his many detractors among the Jews and especially the Christians. Since this was not the case, there must be biblical texts that praise the prophet Muhammad and command believers to follow his teachings.

Some Muslims who studied the Scriptures in their original language, Hebrew, believe that the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned in them by name. However, his two names Muhammad or Ahmad, which mean "highly praised" and "the most praiseworthy", have been intentionally or unintentionally translated. He is also announced through his nation, the Arabs, descendants of Ishmael, the first-born of Abraham, through whom the angel promised the patriarch many offspring. He is also announced through his country, Arabia, as we will show in this study. He is, according to many commentators the "prophet" foretold by Moses, "he is the one to whom everything belongs" (Shiloh) as predicted by Jacob, the "servant of God" prophesied by Isaiah, the "son of man" in the vision of Daniel, and the "intercessor" (Paraclet) announced by Jesus to his disciples. The reason for this is that while Jesus was sent to the Jews to put them back on the straight path, he was also and above all raised up to prepare them for the coming of the kingdom of God, which will be established by the last of the prophets.

Chapter 1

The blessed nation

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. (Genesis 17, 20)

1- The elected peoples

Indeed, Allah chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of Imrân above all people. (Koran 3, 33-34)

God has chosen and blessed some of the peoples of the earth, making a covenant with them and choosing His prophets from among them. The first to benefit from this covenant, whose sign is a rainbow, are Noah and his descendants. In Genesis we read: "Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you."¹ But one of Noah's three sons, his firstborn Shem, seems to have a special place, since he is blessed by his father, while Ham is cursed by him. To Japheth, the third, Noah promised a wide land, but without the right, like Shem, in the blessings of his father². Now, Shem is the ancestor of both Jews and Arabs and others.

Then the covenant narrows further, limiting itself, among the Semites, to the only offspring of Abraham who is promised an innumerable posterity. The Old Testament refers to this covenant: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And

¹ Genesis 9, 8-9

² Genesis 9, 25-27.

Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, as for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."¹ Three passages from this covenant are to be remembered. The first indicates that this covenant is "perpetual", the second that it concerns all the "descendants" of Abraham, and the third lays down the conditions that the contracting party must fulfill: "walk before me and be thou perfect" says the Lord. In other words: "Obey me." But we will come back to this.

The covenant made with Abraham will bring to him an untold number of descendants and to them an extensive territory: "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates".²

Interestingly, this promise of territorial possession is immediately followed by the story of Hagar, Abraham's second wife, who, abused, by her mistress Sarah, is promised in the desert where she has fled, an immense posterity through her son Ishmael, whom she still carries in her womb³. However, it is precisely the descendants of Hagar, the Arabs, who with the advent of Islam, will conquer the whole of this territory promised to their ancestor Abraham.

2- The token of the covenant

The rest of the Bible passage about the covenant with Abraham

¹ Genesis 17, 1-7.

² Genesis 15, 18.

³ Genesis 16, 1-11.

brings a capital indication about the sign of this covenant: "This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."¹ Circumcision, an outward token of submission to the Lord, is symbolically so important that the uncircumcised will be "cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant"², while foreign slaves will also have to comply with this obligation and be circumcised³.

Although Paul who must be considered the true founder of Christianity, is also the one who canceled this commitment without relying on the slightest word of Jesus with all the consequences this decision will have on the history of Salvation. Paul's attitude will be fiercely opposed by the first Christians from the Jewish community of Jerusalem, the Judeo-Christians. Thus, according to the testimony of James the Righteous, says the brother of the Lord, the first head of the Church of Jerusalem, all the faithful of the holy city applied the Law enthusiastically and were angered when they learned that Paul exempted the Jews of the Diaspora from the obligation to have their children circumcised⁴. These Judeo-Christians were simply following the teachings of Jesus, for whom the law had to be applied literally: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."⁵

Jews and Muslims, for their part, perpetuate this tradition to this

¹ Genesis 17, 10-11.

² Genesis 17, 14.

³ Genesis 17, 12-13.

⁴ Acts 21, 20-21

⁵ Matthew 5, 17-18.

day. Even before the advent of Islam, the Arabs practiced circumcision, the seal of the millenary covenant made by the Eternal One with their ancestor Abraham.

3- Isaac and Ishmael

Two names, among the sons of Abraham, emerge from the biblical account of the covenant that the patriarch made with the Lord: Isaac and Ishmael, or rather Ishmael and Isaac, as he is Abraham's eldest son from Hagar he will be the first to be blessed by the angel who comes to his mother in the wilderness¹, and it is through him that Abraham receives the promise of a "great nation" in Genesis 17, 20: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." Abraham, fearing that Ishmael, his firstborn, would not be included in the divine promise made to him through his son Isaac, had implored: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!"² Note that the expression "great nation" is used only five times in the book of Genesis: twice in reference to Ishmael (17, 20 and 21, 18), twice in reference to Abraham (12, 2 and 18, 18), and once in reference to Jacob (46, 3).

Isaac is also blessed by the Lord³, a blessing which, after his invocation, will be conveyed to his second son Jacob, through whom the covenant among the sons of Israel will be maintained, a covenant that will be reiterated on Sinai with Moses at the moment he receives the Tables of the Law: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."⁴

¹ Genesis 16, 10.

² Genesis 17, 18.

³ Genesis 17, 16.

⁴ Exodus 34, 27

Therefore, both Abraham's sons are blessed by the Lord. And they have much more in common: their birth is announced by an angel, their name is chosen by the Lord, an angel saves them from death, both of them are circumcised as a token of the covenant, and both are gathered together at the burial of their father Abraham. So, it is through his first two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, ancestors of both Arabs and Jews, that Abraham receives the promise of giving birth to two blessed nations that will play a leading role in the history of Salvation.

Some Jews and Christians, in contradiction with the explicit terms of their Scriptures, want to reserve to Isaac, and to him alone, the covenant entered into by Abraham with the Lord so as to exclude the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs, and therefore the Muslims. However, the Lord said to Abraham: "And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed."¹ Let us remember the terms of the covenant: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."² The words are even more explicit in Genesis 18, 18-19: "Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Moreover, according to Jews and Christians, this covenant, specific to the descendants of Abraham, concerns, without distinction, all the tribes of Israel born of the twelve sons of Jacob. Yet, four of them were given to the patriarch by the handmaids of

¹ Genesis 21, 13.

² Genesis 17, 7.

his two wives Leah and Rachel. Dan and Naphtali, the fifth and sixth of Jacob's twelve sons, were born to Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid. Likewise, Gad and Asher, Jacob's seventh and eighth sons, have Zilpah, Leah's handmaid¹, as their natural mother. If Jews and Christians want to exclude Ishmael from the covenant, because he is the son of Sarah's handmaid, they must do the same for four of the twelve tribes of Israel, those born to Dan, Nephthali, Gad and Asher, who were also born to handmaidens who became concubines of Jacob.

4- The Breaking of the Covenant

We have seen that, when He announced to Abraham the covenant that He was going to establish with his offspring, the Lord set the conditions: "walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."² Later on, the Lord will remind the sons of Israel, descendants of Isaac through his son Jacob, of the terms of the covenant that they must keep if they want it to continue: "Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers."³ If the Hebrew people want to continue to claim the divine election, they must be careful not to break the law: "If those ordinances depart from before me, said the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever."⁴

The grace of God's people will turn into a curse if they move away from the law and turn to other deities: "Behold, I set before you this

¹ Genesis 30, 1-13.

² Genesis 17, 1-2.

³ Deuteronomy 7, 11-12.

⁴ Jeremiah 31, 36

day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."¹

But the children of Israel did not stop violating the first of these commandments, the Shema Israel, which is the worship of God alone: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the one Lord"², as recalled by one of their prophets, Elijah, who linked the breaking of the covenant to two elements: idolatry and the murder of the prophets: "the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword."³

Jesus himself reproaches to his Jewish contemporaries the attitude of their people towards the prophets: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the prophets."⁴ Following the parable of the wine growers, where is described the way the sons of Israel persecuted and killed the prophets, Jesus therefore clearly announces to his Jewish contemporaries that the kingdom of God will be taken from them and given to another nation: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."⁵ The expression "kingdom of God" refers, in Jesus' words, to the religion of God, since the Jews have never been masters of an earthly kingdom. They have almost always been, and precisely at the time Jesus speaks these words, under the domination of other powers. This "kingdom of God" can also refer to an earthly empire promised to the Jews but which, because of their attitude, will eventually be taken away from them and given to another people.

¹ Deuteronomy 11, 26-28.

² Deuteronomy 6, 4

³ 1 Kings 19, 14.

⁴ Luke 13, 34.

⁵ Matthew 21, 43

5- The nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof

What then is this "nation" that will inherit the kingdom of the Lord and bring forth the fruits thereof? According to Christians, this nation is that of the Gentiles, that is, all non-Jewish peoples. However, the Greek term used leaves no room for doubt, the singular "*ethnos*" and not the plural "*ethnè*": the kingdom of God will be given to a single nation, not to all the nations of the earth. Important clarification: the Greek "*ethnos*" includes the idea of race. In particular, it gave the English term "ethnicity". So, here it is about a single race, not all the races of the earth.

This prophecy of Jesus is to be compared with these words that Moses reports from his Lord regarding the Hebrews: "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation"¹, that is to say, ignorant, can only be the Arab nation to whom the mission of prophet will be entrusted, which will provoke the jealousy of the Jewish people. Indeed, the Arabs, before Islam, did not form a unified people but rather a group of always warring tribes that were marked by ignorance to the extent that the pre-Islamic era was called by the Koran the "era of ignorance" (*Jahiliyyah*)².

Describing the customs of the Bedouins of pre-Islamic Arabia, the English historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) wrote: "The union of the nation consisted only in a vague resemblance of language and manners; and in each community, the jurisdiction of the magistrate was mute and impotent. Of the time of ignorance which preceded Mahomet, seventeen hundred battles 36 are recorded by tradition."³

¹ Deuteronomy 32, 21.

² Koran 3, 154.

³ The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon, London, Strahan & Cadell, 1776-1788.

The prophecy of Jesus is also to be compared to these words of the Lord mentioned in Isaiah 65, 1: "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." The nation called by the name of God is undoubtedly Israel, a name formed on the suffix "El" which means "God" in Hebrew, replaced by the Arab nation which does not bear in it the name of the Lord.

Jesus came to announce rather than to establish this "kingdom of God" which will be set up by someone other than himself. Indeed, he repeated throughout his public life that the Kingdom has not yet arrived, but is yet to come: "And saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel."¹ The coming advent of the kingdom of God is therefore the "gospel" that Jesus came to announce. Let us remember that the term gospel, taken from the Greek "*euaggelion*", means precisely "good news". Jesus' main mission is therefore to announce the Kingdom of God to his people, the Jews, so that they can prepare for it. "And it is not a mistake to see in the kingdom of God the fundamental concept of the preaching of Jesus", as one can read in the Vigouroux Dictionary². The expression "kingdom of God", in its various forms, is therefore found almost a hundred times in the mouth of Jesus, who uses no less than eleven parables to describe it.³ He asserts: "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."⁴ The kingdom of God is therefore to come, it is not contemporary with Jesus who asks his followers to wait and prepare for it. He even ordered the Twelve Apostles to announce it to the Jews: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house

¹ Mark 1, 15.

² *Dictionnaire de la Bible Vigouroux*, Paris, 1912, vol. 5, part 1, p. 1242.

³ Matthew 13, 31-47.

⁴ Luke 4, 43.

of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."¹ Contrary to what some Christians think, deceived by the formula "kingdom of heaven", sometimes used as here to designate the Kingdom of God, the latter is indeed earthly. Bart Ehrman, professor in the faculty of theology at the University of North Carolina, a recognized scholar of the New Testament, is adamant on this point: "This kingdom of God is not "Heaven" - the place you go to when you die - (as in the later Christian tradition). It is a true earthly kingdom."²

For Muslims, the nation that will inherit the kingdom of God and bring forth the fruits thereof can only be the one which descends from Abraham through Ishmael. For if the sons of Israel, descendants of Isaac, broke the covenant made with their ancestor Abraham and renewed with Moses, the sons of Ishmael, are more entitled than anyone to inherit the prophetic mission, in view of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 17:20 to make his firstborn, Ishmael, and his descendants into a great nation. Let us remember that, according to the terms of the Bible, the covenant made with Abraham is "perpetual".

Moreover, the rabbis themselves believe that this prophecy was actually fulfilled more than 2300 years ago after the promise made to Abraham, with the advent of the Prophet Muhammad and of Islam. We can thus read in the translation of the Torah published by Edmont J. Safra, at Genesis 17, 20, this commentary by Rabbi Bekhaye who quotes Rabbi Khanael, two prominent rabbis of the 13th and 11th centuries: "We see that it took 2333 years to the promise made to Ichmaël (Ishmael) to be fulfilled here [with the rise of Islam in the seventh century CE]. This delay is not due to their faults ...Ishmael's offspring remained throughout this long period,

¹ Matthew 10, 5-7

² *Jesus, Interrupted, Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible*, Bart Ehrman, Harper Collins, 2009, p. 157.

nurturing a burning hope that one day the promise would be fulfilled and that they would dominate the world. Is it not our duty, we children of Isaac, who must consider ourselves responsible for the failure to fulfill the promises we received, to hope, on the other hand, that God's promise will be fulfilled and that we do not lose hope?"¹ The commentary in square brackets is that of the contemporary rabbis who collaborated on this edition, which therefore clarifies the explanation of Rabbi Bekhaye who himself quotes Rabbi Khanael. According to these rabbis, when God promised Abraham that he would bring out from Ishmael a "great nation", He announces the emergence of the Muslim nation and of their Prophet Muhammad the most prominent of his descendants.

Yet, according to the detractors of Islam, the "great nation" promised to Ishmael is purely earthly. It is not a nation in the religious sense of the word, a nation guided by a prophet. For them, therefore, this promise does not necessarily make of Muhammad a true prophet. However, if that was the case, how could the Lord have blessed Ishmael and promised Abraham a "great nation" which would give birth to a false prophet, and how could Abraham have rejoiced! Moreover, divine promises are never mere worldly promises, as the English writer Martin Lings explains very well: "It was not one but two great nations that had to look upon Abraham as their father. Two great nations, that is, two well-guided powers, two instruments made to fulfill the will of Heaven, for the blessing promised by God is not earthly, and there is no greatness before God but greatness according to the Spirit. Thus, Abraham is the source of two spiritual streams which need not flow together, but each must follow its own course."²

¹ *Le Houmach*, Edmont J.Safra, 2014, p. 79.

² *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, Martin Lings, Islamic Texts Society, 1983

In fact, the covenant entered into with Abraham is closely related to the birth of the nations descended from his line - especially the Jewish and Arab nations - as clearly indicated by the terms of the covenant: "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations"¹, nations which can only be religious and guided by a prophet.

6- Daniel's vision

The prophecy of Jesus regarding the "Kingdom of God" could be compared with the vision of the Prophet Daniel (Chapter 7) in which he saw four huge beasts symbolizing, according to the most widely accepted Christian interpretation, the four empires which, from the time of Daniel, dominated the ancient world, in particular the land promised to Abraham's descendants from the Nile to the Euphrates (which includes the Holy Land, Palestine), and which persecuted the people of God: the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire and finally the Roman Empire which, in 63 before J.C., sets up its authority over the Holy Land, but which, according to Daniel's dream, will be destroyed, the domination ultimately reverting to the people of God.

However, Muslim commentators see it as a prediction of the establishment of the Kingdom of God, the Muslim empire built on the basis of God's religion, at the expense of the Eastern Roman Empire whose fall is symbolized by the Muslim capture of Jerusalem in 638. There is no doubt that Daniel's vision corresponds very accurately to the historical data with a succession of four pagan empires which will dominate the old world, in particular the holy land, and will persecute the Jewish people and then the first Christians, before the advent of the Muslim empire that will proclaim the worship of a unique God and rehabilitate true believers. And if the Roman Empire becomes Christian from the

¹ Genesis 17, 4.

fourth century with Constantine, it remains nonetheless deeply pagan as we will see later.

In fact, it is this same Constantine that some Muslims associate with the "little horn" which, in Daniel's dream, comes out of the fourth beast (the Roman Empire) after ten horns symbolizing ten kings: "and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots."¹ The angel interpreted the vision as follows: "the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."² The words "it will subdue three kings" apply perfectly to Constantine who seized the power at the expense of three rivals: Maxentius, Maximin Daia and Licinius.

As for the "ten horns" symbolizing ten kings, they could refer to the ten Roman emperors who, before Constantine, persecuted the first Christians. Indeed, the history of the Church mentions ten waves of persecutions during the Roman Empire : the first under Nero (54-68), to which tradition links the martyrs of Peter and Paul of Tarsus, the second under Domitian (81-96), the third under Trajan (98-117), the fourth under Marcus Aurelius (161-180), the fifth under Septimius Severus (193-211), the sixth under Maximin (235-238), the seventh under Decius (249-251), the eighth under Valerian (253-260), the ninth under Aurelian (270-275) and finally the tenth under Emperor Diocletian (284-305), the last and most serious of the persecutions.

Let's go back to the "little horn" in Daniel's vision which seems to play a pivotal role as it represents an emperor who will defeat the true believers and try to change the Law and the times (religious

¹ Daniel 7, 8.

² Daniel 7, 24

holidays)¹ before the definitive establishment of the kingdom of God. We know how Constantine persecuted the Christians who rejected the dogma of the Trinity, the Aryans in particular, how he modified the teachings of Jesus mainly through the Council of Nicaea (325), and the way he modified the Jewish feasts, making the day of the pagan sun (*dies solis*), Sunday, a legal day for rest, thus modifying the institution of the Sabbath and imposing the celebration of the Christian Easter on a different date from the Jewish Easter. Moreover, it was under his reign that the feast of Christmas, which commemorates the birth of Christ, was instituted and its date set for December 25. It should be noted that some Protestants equate this "little horn" with Papal Rome, with the Catholic Church, which is in line with the Muslim interpretation, Constantine being in a way the precursor of this church.

The kingdom of Daniel's vision is at the same time secular and religious, it designates an empire which implements the law of God and succeeds earthly empires based on paganism. In fact, only the Muslim Empire was founded in History on a religion, as the French sociologist Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) asserts: "The ideal created by Muhammad was entirely religious, and the empire founded by the Arabs had the unique phenomenon of being the only great empire founded entirely in the name of religion, from which all its political and social institutions stemmed."²

7- Qedar

The Old Testament, which is primarily a Jewish book, describes the story of God's covenant with the Israelites, descendants of Isaac. It is not surprising, then, that the descendants of Ishmael, in general, were absent from these stories. Nevertheless, among the sons of Ishmael, one name stands out in the oracles of the Jewish prophets,

¹ Daniel 7, 25.

² *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990

those of Isaiah in particular: Qedar, whom Arab historians consider to be the ancestor of the prophet Muhammad.¹ Thus, we find in the Bible this prophecy of Isaiah: "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory."²

In his *Dictionary of the Bible*, André-Marie Gérard sees in this oracle "the pilgrims of North Arabia (Madian) and South Arabia (Seba) on their way to the Messianic Jerusalem"³. But what could be this Jerusalem of the future towards which the Arab pilgrims are heading? We will come back to this in the next chapter.

Consequently, Qedar occupies a very special place among the sons of Ishmael who will give birth to the Arab tribes. He is thus mentioned before his older brother Nebaioth by Isaiah in the preceding passage. He even seems to single-handedly symbolize all Arabs in Ezekiel's words: "Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, in these were they thy merchants."⁴ Jean-Augustin Bost confirms, in his Bible dictionary (1849), that "the language of Qedar, among the rabbis, refers to Arabic."

¹ *Chronique de Tabari*, La Ruche, 2003, p. 430.

² *Isaiah* 60, 4-7

³ *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, Robert Laffont, 1989, p. 831.

⁴ *Ezekiel* 27, 21

Saint Jerome, for his part, places the sons of Qedar "in the desert of the Saracens", which Eusebius and himself situate "to the east of the Red Sea"¹, that is to say in the center-west and north-west of Arabia, in the present Hijaz where the cities of Madinah and Makkah are located.

Conclusion

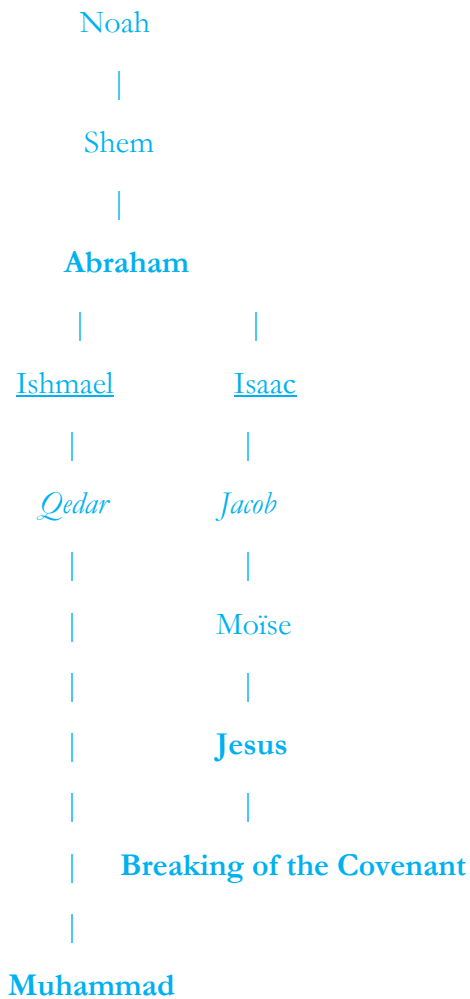
We have shown in this chapter that two nations have been chosen and blessed by the Lord:

- the one born of Isaac, through Jacob, his second son: the Jewish people, from whom came the majority of the prophets.
- the one born of Ishmael, through Qedar, his second son: the Arab people from whom the Prophet Muhammad will emerge.

Isaac and Ishmael are themselves the sons of Abraham, himself blessed by the Lord, and descended from Shem, the only one of Noah's three sons to be blessed by him.

We have shown how the prophetic mission, as foretold by the last Jewish prophet, Jesus, was taken away from the sons of Israel - guilty of breaking the covenant by worshipping false gods and killing the prophets - to be entrusted to another people: the descendants of Ishmael, through the prophet Muhammad. The following diagram summarizes the names of these men and nations on whom the divine choice was made:

¹ *Dictionnaire de la Bible Vigouroux*, Paris, 1912, vol. 2, part 1, p. 358.



Chapter 2

The land of Revelation

1- Oracle on Arabia

The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it. (Isaiah 21:13-17).

According to Muslim commentators, this oracle of Isaiah describes two salient events in the life of the Prophet of Islam. The first one is so important that it marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar: the hegira, the forced exile of the Prophet and his companions from their homeland, Makkah, occupied by his own tribe, Quraysh, who descended from Qedar¹ to the city that gave him refuge, Madinah, the "land of Tema". Tema is both the name of a town north of Madinah and the name of one of Ishmael's² twelve sons. Dedan is the name of a tribe whose ancestor is Dedan, Abraham's grandson, and the name of a city whose remains are also in the region of Madinah, in Al-'Ulâ. Remarkably, both cities were long inhabited by Jewish tribes.

The second event prophesied here, according to commentators, by Isaiah, who said: "within a year, according to the years of an

¹ *The Historical Geography of Arabia*, Charles Forster, London, vol. 1, p. 238-266.

² Genesis 25, 13-15.

hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail" is the first great battle of Islam, the battle of Badr, which, one year after hegira, will pit the heathens of the Makkah tribe of Quraysh, descendants of Qedar, against the newly settled Muslims in Madinah and will result in the victory of the latter. This battle was so important that the Prophet implored the Lord to help his companions, saying: "If you decide to give victory to their opponents, you will never again be worshipped on earth."

Whatever the meaning to be given to this prophecy, it shows that Arabia occupies a special place in the oracles of the biblical prophets, as we shall see later on. This is not surprising when one considers that the cradle of the Jewish nation is in Arabia, as Alexander Westphal writes in his *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*, in the article "Arabia": "The Hebrew people probably came out of Arabia at a similar time, just as Islam, centuries later, emerged from the desert. They migrated north and became part of the northern Semitic peoples, distinct from the Sabians or the southern branch of the Semites. The Hebrew nation thus had an "Arab" origin."

2- Mount Sinai

We will begin this paragraph with a statement that will surprise more than one: Mount Sinai, contrary to what has been believed for centuries, may not be in Egypt but in...Arabia. This view is now shared by a wide spectrum of the academic community, including famous specialists such as Hershel Shanks, editor of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, or Frank Moore Cross, professor of Hebrew at Harvard¹.

Those who were surprised by this announcement will be even more surprised when they learn that Paul, the most influential man in Christianity, himself considers that Mount Sinai is located in

¹ www.ronwyatt.com.

Arabia, especially in Galatians 4:25 where he wrote unequivocally the following: "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia." Christians are very cautious about referring to this text, which undermines the official thesis and situates Arabia at the center of divine revelation, since it is there that Moses supposedly received the Tables of the Law and that, according to Muslims, the Koran was revealed to Muhammad.

We find the same account with the well-known Jewish historian Flavius Joseph, who mentioned, in his book *The Jewish Antiquities*, that Mount Sinai is located in the area of Midian, where Moses found refuge after fleeing from Egypt. Indeed, the *Vigoureux Bible Dictionary* (Volume Four, Part 1, pp. 533-534), relaying in particular on the writings of Eusebius and Jerome who speak of a "city of Midian, in the south of the Roman province of Arabia, East of the Red Sea, towards the Saracen Desert," situates Midian in northwestern Arabia. Flavius Joseph even specifies that the Mount Sinai is "the highest mountain in this region". In Chapter 3 of Exodus there are two passages that confirm the view of Flavius Joseph. In the first, we read the following: "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb."¹ A few verses later, the Lord, after having ordered Moses to return to Egypt to deliver his people from the yoke of Pharaoh, adds: "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon on this mountain."² Now, it is immediately after the exit from Egypt that Moses receives the tables of the law on Sinai.

Alexander Westphal sums up this point of view perfectly in the

¹ Exodus 3, 1.

² Exodus 3, 12.

article of his *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* devoted to Midian: "according to the rather vague data of the Old Testament (Genesis 25:6; Judges 6:3; 1 Kings 11:18; Isaiah 60:6) and those of Joseph (Antiquities of Judaism, II, 11:2), Eusebius (Onomast.) and Ptolemy (VI, 7:2), the land of Midian is located on the eastern coast of the Aelanite Gulf (Akaba), in northwestern Arabia." "We must therefore locate Horeb (Sinai) in northern Arabia (Exodus 3:1, cf. Galatians 4:25)," he concludes. In the article "Sinai," Alexander Westphal wrote about Mount Sinai: "Beke (*Discoveries of Sinai in Arabia and of Midian*, London, 1878), followed by Sayce (*Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, pages 263ff) and other critics, places it in Midian."

3. The Paran Desert

And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran. (Deuteronomy 33, 2).

Modern Bible commentators generally believe that the Paran desert lies in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, i.e., west of the Red Sea, which seems wrong to us for several reasons.

Firstly: It was mentioned in the Bible that Ishmael "was living in the Desert of Paran,"¹ after he and his mother, Hagar, were expelled. However, according to André-Marie Gérard in his *Dictionary of the Bible*, "the desert remained haunted by the Ishmaelite tribes, particularly at the time when, as indicated in the priestly document, the Hebrews crossed it after leaving from Sinai"².

The Bible also states that the children of Ishmael "dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward

¹ Genesis 21, 21.

² *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 1046.

Assyria (Iraq)."¹ In fact, Havilah is located in southern Arabia², while Shur is located in the north of the Arabian Peninsula, as confirmed by the passage in Genesis 25:18 just mentioned and Exodus 15:22. The sons of Ishmael therefore lived between the north and south of Arabia, that is, in the Hijaz, east of the Red Sea, where all or part of the desert of Paran is necessarily located.

Secondly: Origen, Father of the Church, writes the following: "And Abraham took another wife whose name was Ketura. And she bore him Zimran [Gen. 25, 1-2]. From the children of Ketura were born many nations, which live in the Troglodyten desert, and Felix Arabia and beyond it – even the land of the Midians, and the city of Midian lying in the desert beyond Arabia in the region of Paran, to the east of the Red Sea."³

Thirdly: in his Latin translation of Eusebius' Onomasticon, Jerome makes this comment about Horeb: "The mountain of God in the region of Midian next to Sinai beyond Arabia in the desert, where the mountain and the desert of the Saracens, which is called Paran."

Fourthly: Jean-Augustin Bôst in his *Biblical Dictionary* clearly indicates that Paran is located in Arabia, and even in the Hedjaz region. Describing Petrea or rocky Arabia, he writes: "This is now the province of Hedjaz: in the southwest are the famous cities of Makkah and Madinah, places of pilgrimage dear to the Muslims. This region was once divided into the land of Edom, the desert of Paran, the land of Cusan, and so on."

Fifthly: The Bible states that the Hebrews crossed the desert of

¹ Genesis 25, 18.

² *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906), Emil G. Hirsch et A. H. Sayce.

³ *Selecta in Genesim. Patrologiae, Series Graeca*, Origène, J.P. Migne, 1857, vol. 12, p. 119-120.

Paran after setting out from Sinai: "And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran."¹ However, we have shown in the previous chapter that Mount Sinai was most probably located in northern Arabia, in Median. Moreover, it was the error in locating the Mount Sinai that must have led Christian commentators to situate Paran in the Egyptian peninsula now known as the Sinai.

Yet, the location of the Paran desert and the mountain of the same name are of prime importance. Indeed, according to Muslim commentators, this passage from Deuteronomy: "And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran" is an enumeration of the three places where Divine Revelation manifested itself, which is compared here to the light of the sun: Sinai where Moses received the Law, Seir in Palestine where Jesus preached, and Mount Paran in Arabia, more precisely in the Hijaz, which Muslims consider to be the mountains of Makkah where the Prophet Muhammad received his first revelations. This passage in the Bible is, according to them, to be compared with those Koranic verses where God swears by these three holy places: "By the fig and the olive of Jerusalem, and Mount Sinai, and this secure city of Makkah!"² The "fig and olive tree" would thus symbolize Palestine where Jesus preached the Gospel. As a reminder, there is a well-known hill in Jerusalem called the Mount of Olives, and the fig tree is a very common one in this area. As for the "secure city", it is Makkah.

4. The New Jerusalem

We saw in the chapter dealing with Qedar that André-Marie Gérard saw in an oracle of Isaiah³ : "pilgrims from the north

¹ Number 10, 12.

² Koran 95, 1-3

³ Isaiah 60, 6

(Madian) and South of Arabia (Sheba) on their way to the Messianic Jerusalem"¹. However, the only shrine to which the Arabs went on pilgrimage, even before Islam, was that of Makkah, the Kaaba, built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. The Koran states that the Kaaba was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael: "And remember when Abraham raised the foundation of the House with Ishmael, both praying, "Our Lord! Accept this from us. You are indeed the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. Our Lord! Make us both fully submit to You and from our descendants a nation that will submit to you. Show us our rituals, and turn to us in grace. You are truly the Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful Our Lord! Raise from among them a messenger who will recite to them Your revelations, teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them. Indeed, You alone are the Almighty, All-Wise."²

The Prophet whom Abraham here implored his Lord to raise to the Arabs is none other than his descendant Muhammad, the only Arab prophet from Makkah.

After the pilgrims of North and South Arabia, the oracle of Isaiah mentions another part of the Arabs, Qedar, specifically representing the Arabs of the Hijaz, the central-western and north-western part of Arabia, and Nebayot, the first son of Ishmael: "All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee."³ André-Marie Gérard comments this passage quite rightly as follows: "Isaiah quotes this Nebaioth with his brother Qedar among the Arab tribes who will bring their flocks as an offering to the future Jerusalem."⁴

So, here we have the Arab tribes of southern, central and northern

¹ *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 831.

² Koran 2, 127-129.

³ Isaiah 60, 7.

⁴ *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 984.

Arabia, i.e. of the whole peninsula, going on pilgrimage to the future Jerusalem, bringing their flocks as offerings and being at its service. This future Jerusalem can only be Makkah where the Arabs go on pilgrimage, taking with them the animals to be sacrificed.

Likewise, to the Samaritan woman who made this objection to Jesus: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain¹ and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."² This text is to be compared with that of Matthew 21, 43, studied earlier, where Jesus announces to the Jews that the kingdom of God "shall be taken from you, and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof". The covenant having been broken by the descendants of Isaac, God granted the kingdom of God to the descendants of Ishmael and replaced the temple of Jerusalem, definitively destroyed in the year 70 after Jesus' rejection by his people, with the sanctuary of Makkah.

5. The Valley of Balsam

Makkah is mentioned by name in this Psalm of David:
"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools."³ Indeed, with respect to the Kaaba, the House of God in Makkah, the Koran says: "Surely the first House of worship established for humanity is the one at Bakkah - a blessed sanctuary and a guide for all people. In it are clear signs and the standing-place of Abraham. Whoever enters it should be safe. Pilgrimage to this House is an obligation by Allah upon

¹ Garizim.

² *John* 4, 20-21.

³ Psalms 84, 4-6.

whoever is able among the people."¹

The translators of the Bible stood so baffled by the term "Baca" in the Psalm of David that, in many cases, they kept it as it was. Some, however, choose to render this term as "*Balsams*". Here, for example, is the translation of this passage in the Jerusalem Bible: "When passing through the valley of the Balsam tree, where a fountain is kept, the autumn rain envelops them." The same is true of the Ecumenical Translation of the Bible (ETB) which renders the passage as follows: "passing through the valley of the Balsams". The Vigouroux Bible Dictionary explains this choice: "Some authors, in fact, maintain that baka means "to drain" (like tears); hence the plural name bekâ'im, used to designate a shrub from which comes a resinous juice similar to balsam. This shrub, called in Arabic bakâ, is said to have given its name to the valley."²The Hebrew baca in the Bible, which means balsam, is said to have originated in Arabic. The Arabic origin of the name of this shrub actually goes back to its geographical location, which is the Arabian Peninsula, specifically Makkah. Thus, we find in Keil and Delitzsch's commentary on the Old Testament regarding Psalms 84, 7, that baca is a tree from which some kind of fluid flows, and such a tree is the Arab. baka'un, resembling the balsam-tree, which is very common in the arid valley of Makkah.

And in 2 Samuel 5:24, where an identical term is used, both commentators write: "Baca, according to Abulfadl, is the name given in Arabic to a shrub which grows at Makkah and resembles the balsam, except that it has longer leaves and larger and rounder fruit, and from which, if a leaf be broken off, there flows a white pungent sap, like a white tear."

¹ *Koran* 3, 96-97.

² *Dictionnaire de la Bible Vigouroux*, vol. 2, part 2, p 1372.

What then is this type of balsam tree that grows in Makkah and from which the name of this valley is derived? Its scientific name is *Commiphora opobalsamum* while its common name in France is "the balsam of Makkah" (*baumier de la Mecque*). In her doctoral thesis on "Makkah balsa tree" defended at the University of Paris Descartes in 2013, Anne Sophie Malabier wrote: In France, it is called colloquially "Makkah balsam tree" a name that was previously mentioned in Achille Richard's book in 1823. And further on: "In his book published in 1802, Duplessy reported that "the balm of Makkah is considered the most precious of all substances that bear this name". This balm, which originated in Makkah and was obviously very famous, was probably transported to Palestine via the Silk Road that linked southern Arabia to the Mediterranean. This valley would therefore have been called so because of the balsam trees that grow there and made it famous.

In addition, many commentators consider this valley to be a place frequented by pilgrims, which may correspond to Makkah, the only place with a sanctuary where millions of Muslims go on pilgrimage every year. Still in the article Baca, the Vigouroux dictionary specifies on this subject: "According to several recent and authoritative authors, the idea developed in this verse is that of a pious pilgrimage."

Another element that militates in favor of Makkah: the sacred text, as the Vigouroux Dictionary notes, "depicts to us the valley of Baka as an arid land", which corresponds perfectly to Makkah, not to Jerusalem as some Christian commentators suggest. This Koranic verse in which Abraham called upon his Lord on behalf on Ishmael, settled by him in Makkah, and his descendants, takes on its full meaning here: "Our Lord! I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley, near Your Sacred House."¹ Note that Abraham, in total

¹ Koran 14, 37.

accordance with the psalm, uses the terms "*valley*" and "*house*": Blessed are they that dwell in thy house" intones the author of the psalm.

A last argument in favor of Makkah is that the Ka'bah, the "house of God," is mentioned at a time when the temple in Jerusalem had not yet been built. The Psalms of David actually predate the construction of the temple, built by his son, King Solomon.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have emphasized the vital place of Arabia in the history of Salvation, a place that Jewish and especially Christian commentators have deliberately downplayed, notably by locating Mount Sinai and the desert of Paran in what has been erroneously called the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, whereas both are located in the northwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, but also by blindly refusing to consider Makkah as the new Jerusalem announced by the prophets and Christ

Yet, Makkah is today the only shrine to which millions of believers go on pilgrimage every year. The holy city of Makkah is also, for Muslims, the center of the world to which one and a half billion believers turn to every day in their prayers to the Lord of the universe. Doesn't Makkah deserve, for all these reasons, the title of "the new Jerusalem"?



Chapter 3

The Promised Prophet

I will inflict My torment on whoever I will. But My mercy encompasses everything. I will ordain mercy for those who shun evil, pay alms-tax, and believe in Our revelations. "They are` the ones who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whose description they find in their Torah and the Gospel. (Koran 7, 155-157)

1- The Prophet announced by Moses

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. (Deuteronomy 18:18)

If there is a chapter of the Old Testament that stirred up controversies between Christians and Muslims a long time ago, then it is this declaration contained in Deuteronomy 18, 18 and which Muslim apologists apply to Muhammad for the following reasons:

Firstly: the words "from among their brethren" refer to Arabs, brothers of the Jews, since the former are descendants of Ishmael, while the latter have as their ancestor Isaac, brother of Ishmael and second son of Abraham. This typically Semitic formulation may be surprising, but it still comes up in the Old Testament concerning the sons of Esau, called "brothers" of the sons of Israel, since Esau is the brother of Israel (Jacob), both of them sons of Isaac¹. Now, God did not raise up, among the descendants of Ishmael, any other prophet than Muhammad.

¹ Deuteronomy 2, 4.

Secondly: the phrase "like unto thee" corresponds well to Muhammad who, like Moses, was both lawgiver and leader of his people. It does not apply, contrary to what Christians think, to Jesus who did not bring a new law and was not the king expected by Israel. Nor does it apply to Joshua or Samuel, as some Jews claim, who cannot be compared to Moses, a prophet of whom the Bible says: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face."¹

Thirdly: the words "will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" are perfectly suited to Muhammad, who, being illiterate, simply repeated the words that Gabriel conveyed to him from God.

Christians refute these arguments in their entirety on the grounds that the context excludes from the outset any non-Jewish prophet and that the expression "brothers of the sons of Israel" in the Bible generally refers to the Hebrews themselves

The strength of the arguments put forward by Christians is undeniable. There is, however, a passage in the Gospels which should have puzzled the churchmen but which does not seem to have attracted their attention, unless they have knowingly ignored it in view of its implications. It is the passage which relates the interrogation imposed by the Pharisees on John the Baptist: "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ."²

A little further on, the Pharisees rebuked him: "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"

¹ Deuteronomy 34, 10.

² John 1, 19-21.

The Prophet"¹

From these two passages it is inferred on the one hand that the Scriptures announce the coming of a prophet, a known prophet of a particular rank, as indicated by the use of the definite article "the" and, on the other hand, that this prophet is different from the Christ

Another passage of the New Testament confirms that during the time of Jesus the Jews were still waiting for another prophet in addition to the Messiah: "Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, this is the Christ."²

Now, many Christian commentators, like Origen, establish a link between the prophet foretold by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18 with the one awaited by the Jews at the time of Jesus

Although it is not possible to identify Muhammad with the prophet announced by Moses, there is no doubt that the Jews were still waiting for a prophet different from the Messiah in the first century of the Christian era. The fact is that until now, no one has come from among the Jews to fulfill this prophecy. Indeed, the only man who, after Jesus, declared himself a prophet and founded a religion that he claims to be from the God of Abraham is the prophet of Islam.

2- The Prophet foretold by Jacob

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. (Genesis 49:10)

It was on his deathbed that Jacob made this prediction before his

¹ John 1, 25.

² John 7, 40-41.

twelve sons, to whom he revealed the future of their respective tribes. The translators of the Old Testament, confronted with the difficulties presented by this word, which occurs only once in the Bible, generally restore the term Shiloh as it is, without translating it. The Syriac Bible, known as Peshitta, however, renders it as follows: "He for whom they are destined", that is, the sovereign scepter and staff, which, according to Christian commentators, are both temporal and spiritual powers. In other words, as with the prophet-kings of Israel, like David and Solomon, who came from Judah, this Shiloh will be both a ruler and a prophet. But, unlike the last two, he will extend his control over all peoples, not just the Jewish nation, as the phrase "and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" indicates.

According to Christian, this Shiloh is Jesus, but André-Marie Gérard admits in his *Dictionary of the Bible* (p. 210) that "there is no other text that calls the Messiah by the name of Shiloh." He continues: "So, we guessed that it was an error in reading that the translators corrected in very different ways:"...until the one to whom it [the scepter] belongs comes", or "until the tribute is brought to him", or again with Saint Jerome: "until the one who is to be sent comes". So many descriptions that fit Muhammad much more than Jesus, even though nothing establishes with certainty that this Shiloh is indeed the prophet of Islam." Indeed, it was Muhammad who founded an empire and imposed a tribute on non-Muslims, while Jesus paid tribute to the Romans¹. Muhammad is repeatedly referred to in the Koran as "the one sent by God," a title that is never applied to Jesus by the four evangelists. Furthermore, Jesus claimed neither temporal nor spiritual power, explaining that his kingdom was not of this world.²

¹ Matthew 17, 24-27.

² John 18, 36

Moreover, why, if this Shiloh is indeed the Messiah, is this prophecy not applied to Jesus in the New Testament as are those of Isaiah or David, for example, when it stems from the patriarch Jacob, of a higher rank than the prophet Isaiah or even King David? Probably because the earlier Christians made no link between the Messiah and this Shiloh.

According to the famous Strong Dictionary of the Bible, the term "Shiloh" would be derived from the Hebrew word "Shalah" which includes the notions of "tranquility" and "peace". Likewise, Jean-Daniel Macchi, in *Israel and its tribes according to Genesis 49*, concludes a long philological study of the Hebrew "Shiloh" with the following statement: "The interpretation of שִׁלֹה (Shiloh) in the sense of a concept, "tranquility" or "peace", thus seems to us to be the most likely proposal. The expression 10b would then mean "until peace comes" and would refer to a future or contemporary era of tranquility."¹ Shiloh would therefore not refer to a man, but to a new era. It is difficult not to make a comparison between this interpretation, shared by many contemporary specialists, and the religion of Islam, a word made up of the Semitic root s, l, m, which means "peace" (it gave notably the Hebrew "Shalom"), peace of the soul obtained by submission (aslama) to the will of God.

3- The Prophet announced by Isaiah

Let us now read another oracle from Isaiah that some Christians mistakenly interpret as meaning Jesus: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail

¹ *Israël et ses tribus selon Genèse 49*, Jean-Daniel Macchi, Fribourg, 1999, p. 109.

nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law [...] Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.¹

Qedar is still present in this passage which, according to André-Marie Gérard, predicts the rehabilitation of his descendants in the future Jerusalem². According to Muslims, this passage is an announcement of the advent of the most prominent of his descendants, the prophet of Islam who, unlike Jesus, fits perfectly the description of this "servant" who will "announce justice to the nations". Indeed, Muhammad is more than once referred to in the Koran as "the servant of God" as in this verse: "He is the One Who sends down clear revelations to His servant to bring you out of darkness and into light."³

Similarly, he appreciated to be called so by his companions, to whom he once said: "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a Slave. So, call me the Slave of Allah and His Apostle."⁴

Moreover, unlike Jesus who, by his own admission, was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel⁵, Muhammad was sent to all the nations of the earth. About the Prophet Muhammad, God says in the Koran: "We have sent you only as a mercy for the whole

¹ Isaiah 42, 1-11.

² *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 1161.

³ Koran 57, 9.

⁴ Bukhari, 3372.

⁵ Matthew 15, 24.

world."¹

These words of Isaiah: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law" describe accurately all the struggles undertaken by the Prophet of Islam throughout his twenty-three years of his preaching to spread his message and his law, while Jesus, whose public life lasted at most two or three years, brought no law, saying on the contrary : "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."² Note that the text says "his law" and not "the law", which means that this "servant" will bring a new law, the Islamic law after the Mosaic law.

We have seen in the Koranic verse quoted a few lines earlier that Muhammad was raised up to men to "bring them out of darkness into light" which perfectly corresponds to Isaiah's words: "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house".

Lastly, and above all, Isaiah invites the Arabs, symbolized here by Qedar, and the inhabitants of Sela, the capital of ancient Petra Arabia, to rejoice and glorify the Lord who sent them his servant and his chosen one, one of their own, to bring them out of darkness into the light. A quick search in the Bible indicates that the only nation invited like here to rejoice, apart from Israel of course, is the Arab nation, symbolized by its most prominent ancestor, Qedar, who, let us recall, is placed in the genealogy of the Prophet Muhammad. However, one of the only regions of the ancient world where Christianity has never succeeded in establishing itself is precisely the Hijaz, which is naturally resistant to any outside influence and where the Arab tribes live, especially the sons of

¹ Koran 21, 107.

² Matthew 5, 17.

Kedar. On this subject, Edward Gibbon wrote: "isolated from the rest of the people, the Arabs used to confuse the ideas of strangers and enemies."¹ If Christianity had been able to settle in the borders of Arabia, to the south under the influence of Abyssinia and to the north, under the influence of the Byzantine Empire, it never succeeded to penetrate the Hijaz, the heart of the Arabian Peninsula and the homeland of the sons of Kedar.

4- The Prophet announced by Jesus

And when Jesus, son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel! I am truly Allah's messenger to you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and giving good news of a messenger after me whose name will be Ahmad." (Koran 61, 6)

The Gospel of John is the only one that reproduces the speech Jesus made at his last supper with the apostles. Strangely enough, this account is absent from the synoptics, even though it is of paramount importance for the future of humanity. Christ indicates in it the guide that men will have to follow after his death. The Greek Gospel calls this guide "Parakletos" which will give the French "Paraclet". Here is part of the speech: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment [...] Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."²

According to Christians, this Paraclete is "the Holy Spirit" or "the Spirit of truth", as is clear from the text. But this belief is

¹ *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788), Edward Gibbon, London, Strahan & Cadell.

² John 16, 7-13.

contradicted by the other words of the same Gospel passage, which states that the Paraclete: "shall not speak of himself", "but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak ", "he will shew you things to come" and "when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin." The fact is that "speaking", "hearing", "announcing" or "convincing" are the characteristics of a human being, not of a spirit, of a prophet, a spirit of truth or of a Holy Spirit, all the more so since the verb "heard" translates the Greek word "akouô", which means perceiving sounds from which it is derived, for example, "acoustics" in English. The same observation applies to the verb "speak" corresponding to the Greek word "laleô," which, in its general form, means "making sounds". This is what made the French researcher Maurice Bucaille writes in his book *"The Bible, the Koran and Science "*, the following: "It therefore becomes clear that the communication to man which He here proclaims does not in any way consist of a statement inspired by the agency of the Holy Spirit. It has a very obvious material character moreover, which comes from the idea of the emission of sounds conveyed by the Greek word that defines it. The two Greek verbs 'akouô' and 'laleô' therefore define concrete actions which can only be applied to a being with hearing and speech organs. It is consequently impossible to apply them to the Holy Spirit."¹

Similarly, in John 14:30, Jesus describes this Paraclete as "the prince of the world", an expression that can only be suitable for a man.

Thus, we are faced with a problem that Alexander Westphal brilliantly summed up in his *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*, in the article about Paraclete: "Is he personal? On the one hand his action is conscious, loving, nuanced. On the other hand, he is sent by the

¹ *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des connaissances modernes*, Maurice Bucaille, Seghers, Paris, 1976, p. 108.

Father, on behalf of Jesus (John 14, 26); Jesus sends him and he comes from the Father. See (John 15, 26) the spirit? An old problem, it has never been completely resolved."

To this first problem is added another one. The announced Paraclete "will come only after the departure of Jesus". To claim that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit is therefore to affirm that the Holy Spirit was not present during the public life of Jesus, which contradicts the Gospel itself, where one can, for example, read the following: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him."¹

To solve this double difficulty, one must refer to the original meaning of the Greek word *parakletos* and to its use outside the Gospel of John. On this subject, Alexandre Westphal wrote: "Parakletos in Greek refers, outside the New Testament, to a person who is called a supporter or a defender of a cause, one who pleads or intercedes." One can also read in the *Small Dictionary of the New Testament* by A. Tricot: "Paraclete was a term commonly used by Hellenistic Jews of the first century in the sense of intercessor, defender." Having excluded the terms "advocate" or "defender", which have a legal connotation that the term Paraclete does not have, as part of a lengthy study that examined the semantics of the Greek word *Parakletos*, David Pastorelli wrote in the conclusion of his book entitled the *Paraclete in the Johannine Corpus*: "The sense of intercessor is firmly established in 1 John 2, 1-2 as well as in Philo and in rabbinic, early Christian and patristic literature."²

The most accurate translation of the word "Paraclete" is,

¹ Luke 3, 21-22.

² *Le Paraclet dans le corpus johannique*, David Pastorelli, Berlin, 2006, p. 291.

therefore, "the intercessor", a term that only suits a man. Jesus himself was "Paraclete" as indicated in this other chapter of the Gospel of John (14, 16), where he states: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter" or from John's first epistle where he uses the same word, Paraclete, to refer to Jesus as an intercessor to the Lord: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."¹ Regarding these words from John's Epistle, it is stated in Vigouroux's dictionary that "the Savior (Jesus) performs the role of the paraclete through intercession and intervention to effectively defend us against the justice of the Father."²

Maurice Bucaille can therefore only conclude: "According to the rules of logic therefore, one is brought to see in John's Paraclete a human being like Jesus, possessing the faculties of hearing and speech formally implied in John's Greek text. Jesus therefore predicts that God will later send a human being to Earth to take up the role defined by John, i.e. to be a prophet who hears God's word and repeats his message to man. This is the logical interpretation of John's texts arrived at if one attributes to the words their proper meaning."³

The Paraclete is therefore a human being of the same nature as Jesus and with the same mission, since the latter announces "another Paraclete" like him, an intercessor charged with pleading the cause of men before the Lord.

How then do we interpret the mention of the Spirit of truth (16, 13) or the Holy Spirit (14, 26) in the Gospel of John, immediately after the mention of the Paraclete? Some believe that the matter is

¹ 1 John 2, 1.

² *Dictionnaire de la Bible Vigouroux*, vol. 4, part 2, p. 2118-2119.

³ *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des connaissances modernes*, Maurice Bucaille, Seghers, Paris, 1976, p. 109.

merely an addition or perhaps a simple comment by the scribes. Thus, the biblical scholar André Paul writes: "Christian tradition has identified this figure with that of the Holy Spirit. However, the original character of this identification has been called into question, and it has sometimes been suggested that the Paraclete was in the first place an independent saving figure, only later confused with the Holy Spirit."¹

For his part, George Johnston, in *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, mentions a number of commentators who argue that the Paraclete is not the Holy Spirit: "Following F. Spitta, H. Delafosse, H. Windisch, H. Sasse, and R. Bultmann, Betz asserts that the Paraclete and the Holy Spirit represent two different realities."²

According to Maurice Bucaille, this addition could well be intentional: "The presence of the term 'Holy Spirit' in today's text could easily have come from a later addition made quite deliberately. It may have been intended to change the original meaning which predicted the advent of a prophet subsequent to Jesus and was therefore in contradiction with the teachings of the Christian churches at the time of their formation; these teachings maintained that Jesus was the last of the prophets."

It should be noted that the intercessory role of the Prophet Muhammad is one of the foundations of the Muslim creed, and that it is almost as central as that of redeemer of the Messiah in Christianity. But unlike redemption, the dogma of intercession, already found in Judaism, has its source in the founding texts of Islam. The verb "to intercede" and its derivatives appear more than twenty times in the Koran. Indeed, the Prophet said: "I have interceded with my Lord on behalf of my nation." And he also said:

¹ *Encyclopædia Universalis*, « Paraclet ».

² *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, George Johnston, Cambridge, 1970, p. 115.

"I will be the first intercessor in the Paradise." He again said: "There is for every apostle a prayer which shall be granted, but every prophet showed haste in his prayer. I have, however, reserved mine for the intercession on behalf of my nation on the Day of Resurrection."

5- Who is the son of man?

Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matthew 24, 44).

Anyone who reads these words of Jesus, without the Christian comments that usually go with them, will inevitably conclude that Jesus announces the coming of another person - who is not him - called "the Son of man" and, as the words "be ye also ready" show it, is of the utmost importance. The term "Son of Man" is very well known to the Jews whom Jesus addresses. It refers to the vision of Daniel we have already spoken of, especially in the passage describing the "Son of Man" through whom the kingdom of God will be established forever on earth: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."¹

Nevertheless, Christian commentators claim, without the slightest evidence that Jesus, in Matthew 24, 44, speaks of Himself, announcing His own return: the parousia. However, as is the case here, the formula "Son of Man", which was repeated nearly eighty times in Jesus' mouth, is always used in the third person, as if it were someone other than himself. Thus, Luke ascribes this saying to

¹ Daniel 7, 13-14.

Jesus: "Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: "But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God"¹. Here is the same passage reported by Mark: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed of him."²

However, this passage is so problematic for Matthew that he believes it is necessary to remove the expression "Son of Man" and to replace it with the pronoun "I", which is much more natural in this place after the pronoun "me", if obviously Jesus speaks of himself: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."³

The prevailing interpretation since the time of Rudolf Bultmann⁴ is that Jesus speaks of the Son of Man in the third person, which indicates that he does not refer to himself. Rather, Jesus might have considered himself a harbinger of someone who would come after him as a Savior. It was only after Easter, when Jesus would have appeared to some of his disciples who believed him to be dead on the cross, that the first Christians identified him with this saving figure of the Son of Man. Moreover, the disciples of Jesus never attribute to him in the Gospels the title of "Son of Man", contrary to the title of "Son of God" used thirteen times by them in the New Testament to designate the Messiah. Likewise, this title is never applied to Jesus by Paul, who is thoroughly familiar with the

¹ Luke 12, 8-9.

² Mark 8, 38

³ Matthieu 10, 32-33.

⁴ *Frage nach dem messianischen Bewusstsein Jesu und das Petrus-Bekenntnis*, ZNW 19, 1919-1920, p. 165-174.

Scriptures and, in particular, with the vision of Daniel, and who would not have failed to attribute this glorious title to the one whom he raised to the rank of God. This title is also absent from the formulas of the Christian creed.

All this leads some commentators, such as Lietzmann in *Der Menschensohn* (1896), to state that "the Aramaic expression of the Gospel, *barends* (Son of Man), could not represent a Messianic title, nor did it appear in Christian literature with that meaning until the 1960s and 1990s," that is, belatedly.

Moreover, Daniel's description of the son of man in no way corresponds to Jesus, who did not destroy the Roman Empire, but rather answered the question of whether it was permitted to pay tribute to Caesar: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." "To say that the Roman Empire destroyed Christianity through Constantine in particular by distorting the message of Jesus is more accurate than saying that Christianity destroyed the Roman Empire which lasted several centuries after it. One can thus read in Arthur Beugnot's *Histoire de la destruction du paganisme en Occident* (1797-1865): "Almost imperceptibly, pagan customs crept' into the Church. The nominal conversion of the emperor at the beginning of the 5th century caused great rejoicing: the world, covered with a mantle of justice, entered the Christianity of Rome. Then the work of corruption made rapid progress. Paganism seemed defeated, while it was really victorious: its spirit now ruled the Roman Church. In spite of their abjuration, whole populations, pagan in their morals, tastes, prejudices and ignorance, passed under the Christian banner with their baggage of beliefs and superstitious practices. Christianity in Rome adopted and integrated a large part of the system of the ancient imperial cult and its festivals, which all took on more or less

¹ Matthew 22, 17-21

Christian colors."¹

The first Christians, forgetting the words of the Messiah: "My kingdom is not of this world"², awaited the imminent return of the Son of Man, Jesus, descending from the clouds and surrounded by angels, to establish the kingdom of God on earth. And they are waiting for him to this day!



¹ *Histoire de la destruction du paganisme en Occident*, Arthur Beugnot, 1835, vol. 2, p. 264-266.

² John 18, 36.

Conclusion

Thus, the Prophet Muhammad was announced through his people, the descendant of Ishmael, who would give birth to a "great nation" according to the promise made to Abraham, through his land, the land of revelation par excellence, and even through his city, the New Jerusalem mentioned in the texts. He was also directly announced by the prophets through prophecies which, if they do not apply to him, remain unfulfilled to this day. How long will Jews and Christians wait for the fulfillment of their Scriptures concerning the promised prophet, the "Son of Man", the Paraclete who will intercede with God on behalf of believers?

How long will Jews and Christians wait for the fulfillment of their Scriptures regarding the promised prophet, the "Son of Man", the Paraclete who will intercede with God on behalf of believers? How long will they persevere in refusing to admit that the kingdom of God predicted by Daniel and foretold by Jesus had already been established through the Muslim empire? Didn't Daniel announce that this kingdom would lead to the downfall of the Roman Empire, which had vanished for centuries for the benefit of the Muslim Empire? Did not Jesus warn his disciples, more than two thousand years ago, of the nearness of his coming? What are they waiting for to acknowledge that what was foretold in the Scriptures did indeed happen through the advent of the Prophet Muhammad and Islam?

Are not the churchmen afraid that they will be among those who will say to Jesus, on the Day of Resurrection: "Lord, Lord, have we

not prophesied in thy name?"¹ Are not Christians who blindly follow the teachings of the Church afraid to be among those described by Jesus in these words: "Not everyone that said unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."² Now who, if not Christians, consider Christ to be their Lord, and who, if not Muslims, are entirely subject to the will of God!



¹ Matthew 7, 22.

² Matthew 7, 21.

Part Two

The announcements of a prophet

Introduction

"The commonly accepted etymology of the word "prophet" brings this word from a Greek word meaning "to say in advance" which considers prophecy as a prediction of the future. This interpretation was already accepted by St. Irenaeus, St. Ambrose, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Great", explains the *Vigouroux Bible Dictionary*¹, which adds a few pages later: "The true distinguishing mark of false and true prophets was the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of their predictions. God himself had revealed this criterion to Moses (Deut. 18, 20-22)."² The Vigouroux Dictionary refers in particular to these words: "And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken." The mission of the prophet is so closely associated with the ability to foretell the future that the Hebrew prophet was once called a "seer": "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer."³ Yet, Muslim scholars have counted dozens of Muhammad's prophecies that were actually fulfilled during his life, or even after his death, not to mention those related to the end of time to which we will devote a separate chapter. We will limit ourselves here to a few examples taken from the two collections of prophetic traditions whose authenticity is unanimously accepted by Muslims: the collection of Bukhari

¹ *Dictionnaire de la Bible Vigouroux*, vol. 5, part 1, p. 709.

² *Ibid*, p. 716.

³ 1 Samuel 9, 9.

and that of Muslim, considered by Muslim scholars to be the most authentic religious books after the Koran.

Chapter 1

The prophecies of Muhammad

1- Prophecies realized at the beginning of Islam

First prophecy: the death of his daughter.

Prophet Muhammad announced that his daughter Fatima would be the first person in his family to join him after his death. Aisha, the Prophet's wife, relates the following:

Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, who had the same gait as her father, arrived one day. Upon seeing her, the Prophet greeted her with the words: "Welcome, my daughter." He then made her sit on his right or left and confided in her which made her cry. I then asked her why she was crying. But he whispered a few words that made her smile this time. I said: "I've never seen anyone smile so quickly after crying." Then I asked him about what he had said to her. She replied: "I will not divulge the secrets of God's Messenger." When the Prophet died, I questioned her again. This time she answered: "He first told me: 'The angel Gabriel used to teach me the Koran once a year. But this year he did so twice, making me think that my end was near. And you will be the first person in my family to join me'". He then said: "Fatima! Wouldn't you be satisfied to be the noblest woman in this nation?" That's

what made me smile."¹

In fact, she died only six months after her father's death and so was the first person in her family to join him.

Second prophecy: the conquest of Persia, the Byzantine Empire and Egypt.

The Prophet announced to Muslims that they would conquer Arabia, Persia, and the Eastern Roman Empire, saying: "You will attack Arabia and God will enable you to conquer it, then you would attack Persia and He would make you to conquer it. Then you would attack the Byzantine Empire and God will enable you to conquer it."²

Let us note that the Prophet does not mention Egypt here, whereas it was an essential element of the history of the Moslem conquests, for the simple reason that this country, at the time, was an integral part of the Byzantine Empire. However, Egypt is mentioned independently in this other prediction of the Prophet: "You will conquer Egypt."³

It took only ten years for Muhammad's prophecies to be fulfilled, and exactly in the order indicated. A few months after his death in 632, his successor, Abu Bakr, managed to unify the Arabian Peninsula. Then, in 637, the Sassanid Persians were defeated at Qadissiyah. Their capital, Ctesiphon, fell the same year. Jerusalem was wrested from the Eastern Roman Empire as early as 638 and in 639, a first incursion into the Nile Delta was the prelude to the fall of Alexandria, evacuated by the Byzantines in 642.

¹ Bukhari, 3624; Muslim, 2450

² Muslim, 2900.

³ Muslim, 6446

2- Prophecies relating to the end of time

First prophecy: Arabia will become green again.

The Prophet announced more than fourteen centuries ago:

"The Last Hour will not come before the land of Arabia reverts to meadows and rivers."¹

We can deduct from these words of the Prophet two things: the first is that Arabia was green at a certain time and rivers flowed in it, and the second thing is that it will return to this again.

"Green Arabia" is precisely the name of the conference that was held on April 24, 2014 in the city of Oxford, under the auspices of the School of Archaeology of the University of Oxford. This conference, which was attended by archaeologists and climatologists from all over the world, was to present, at the halfway point, the results of the Palaeodeserts project.

The project, which involved more than 30 academics from a dozen institutions and seven countries, and was granted 2.4 million euros by the European Research Council, was to study the close link between human history and climate change over the centuries in the Arabian Peninsula. The Palaeodeserts team, based at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Germany, worked in various disciplines such as paleontology, geography, geochronology or animal and human genetics.

The conclusions of the conference are as follows: The moderate climate of the Arabian Peninsula at a certain time in

¹ Muslim, 1687.

history, with hundreds of lakes, rivers and meadows, made it a suitable place for the settlement of our ancestors coming from Africa, the cradle of humanity, before these human groups scattered to other areas of the earth. Professor Michael Petraglia, head of the Palaeodeserts Project, explained: "We called it *Green Arabia* because many times in the past Saudi Arabia was green, with grasslands, woodlands, rivers and lakes."

Michael Petraglia, co-director of the Centre for Asian Archaeology at the School of Archaeology at the University of Oxford, explains how the project came about: "From photos of NASA taken from the Arabian desert, we were able to see a whole underground network of river valleys and ancient lake basins."

The conclusions of the conference and the results of the Palaeodeserts project were widely reported by the scientific press and even by the non-specialized media. Thus, under the title: *Green Arabia plays a key role in human evolution*, the BBC website published an article by Sylvia Smith on September 16, 2015 which read: "Scientists have highlighted the pivotal role played by the Arabian Peninsula in the exodus of humanity from Africa. Far from being a desert, the region was once covered with lush vegetation and crossed by rivers, providing a rich hunting ground for our ancestors." The journalist quoted the project leader, Michael Petraglia, as saying: "The innovative satellite technology has made it possible to map more than 10,000 lakes across Arabia, including under the arid Nefud Desert."

Even before the conference, on February 23, 2015, the BBC published an article by Michael Marshall who wrote: "Nowadays Arabia is a fierce desert, but it was once densely

vegetated, and could have been a home to the first humans that left Africa."

Summarizing the findings of the Palaeodeserts group, the journalist wrote: "His team's findings suggest that the monsoon is spreading in Arabia every 23,000 years, allowing plants and animals to flourish at regular intervals in the region."

Scientists have therefore established a link between the existence in Arabia at a given time of a temperate climate, green lands, rivers and animals, and the settlement of human groups that left the African continent to settle in Arabia before moving to the rest of the world when a new climate change took place.

In an article published on the New York Times website on November 2, 2018, Nicholas St. Fleur confirms that traces of ancient human activity discovered in the Saudi desert suggest that the first settlers found an area that resembled the East African savannah they left behind. In particular, he writes: "Beneath the sands of the Arabian Desert lies evidence of the peninsula's wetter and greener past. Fossils of elephants, antelopes, and jaguars, long since extinct, suggest not an arid region, but a thriving savannah dotted with waterholes."

The English-language Emirati newspaper, *The National*, in an article devoted to the Oxford conference, quotes Professor Petraglia: "We now have evidence of successive cycles throughout History between humidity and drought. We have aridity and the formation of deserts, but these are followed by humidity and the formation of lakes and rivers. This environment has attracted people across the Sahara and as far as Arabia. It can be predicted that in the future wet periods

will reappear across the Sahara and Arabia."

Arabia not only was green, and on several occasions in its history, but it will be so again, just as the Prophet predicted it more than fourteen centuries ago.

At the Oxford conference, Rick Potts and Adrian Parker tried to explain how these climatic cycles came about: "The peninsula sits at the confluence of three major global climate systems: the Mediterranean westerlies, the East African monsoons and the Indian Monsoons. The latter two in particular form the potent 'intertropical convergence zone', which during interglacials shifted northwards from its present position, bringing water and life to the Arabian Peninsula. This was vividly demonstrated by Richard Jennings using global climate models."

In an article published in the journal *Science* on August 29, 2014, Andrew Lawler confirms that: climate models suggest that during the intervals between ice ages, this greening spreads across the peninsula. According to the models, the monsoon system then slips northward, drenching what is now desert for a few thousand years or more before resuming its more typical southerly course."

Further on, he writes: "During the wet spells, lakes filled up, rivers ran, and a savann alike environment resembling that of today's East Africa dominated Arabia.

He adds : "There could be tens of thousands of former lakes and wetlands" in Arabia during the wet periods, says Paul Breeze of King's College London, a hydrologist who has already identified 1300 paleolake and wetland sites in just 10% of the peninsula."

Linking these climatic phenomena to the Prophet's announcement, Andrew Lawler writes: "ACCORDING TO A SAYING of the Prophet Muhammad, Judgment Day will not come "until the land of the Arabs returns to its state of lush pasture and abundant rivers." The notion that the sand dunes and bare mountains of Arabia were once verdant has long demanded a leap of faith."

In other words, it is no longer a mere belief, but a scientific reality.

Nothing could have told the Prophet, more than fourteen centuries ago, that Arabia, one of the driest regions on earth, was green and wet in the distant past and that it would become a land of rivers and green vegetation again.

Second prophecy: the race for skyscrapers.

Another prediction of the Prophet Muhammad that came true is the race towards towering buildings. In response to the one who asked him about certain signs of the Hour, the Prophet replied: "when you see the barefoot, naked, destitute shepherds competing in making tall buildings."¹

Yet, this race has been underway since the early 20th century and has accelerated in the 21st century. Thus, according to the annual report published by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH), based at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, in 2018 there were no fewer than 1,478 towers over 200 meters in the world, an increase of 141% compared to 2010!

But one region of the globe seems to be particularly at the

¹ Muslim, 8.

forefront of this frantic race towards the construction of towering buildings: the Middle East, and more specifically...the Arabian Peninsula. Thirteen towers over 200 meters high were built in the Middle East in 2018, including ten in Dubai alone. Now, when asked about the identity of these "shepherds" who, at the end of time, will embark on this race towards towering buildings, the Prophet replied: "They are the Arabs." And in fact, today, the highest tower in the world is in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where the Burj Khalifa is 828 meters high. The second place is occupied by the famous "Clock Tower" of Makkah, which is over 600 meters long. But these two skyscrapers should be overtaken as early as 2021 by the first tower exceeding one kilometer (1007 meters exactly) under construction today in the city of.....Jeddah, only 70 kilometers from Makkah. Initially, the tower was supposed to measure 1,600 meters, but the architect, Adrian Smith, had to change his plans because the surface was not stable enough to support such a structure.

In his famous commentary on Muslim's book, An-Nawawi explains Muhammad's prophecy as follows: "This means that the Bedouins and their fellow Bedouins among the poor will become so rich that they will proudly embark on a frenzied race towards the construction of towering buildings."

And in fact, these skyscrapers have replaced Bedouin tents in a single generation. "The Arab countries of the Gulf did not experience the traditional pattern of rural exodus. The oil explosion immediately transformed small cities into megalopolis", explain Olivier Da Lage, editor in chief at RFI and Middle East specialist, and Gérard Grzybek, journalist, in

a book on the Gulf published in 1985.¹ "Real new cities emerge ex nihilo from the desert," they write a little further on.²

Before oil, Dubai was just a village for fishermen. Today, it can boast of having the tallest tower in the world. However, Dubai did not export its first barrel of crude oil before 1969. This means that the transition from poverty to the luxury of skyscrapers was experienced by the same generation. It now appears that the hadith of the Prophet indicates that, after enduring poverty and misery, the same Bedouins will embark on this race towards the construction of towering buildings. Some of the leaders of the Gulf countries have lived in the desert and have sometimes experienced deprivation, as Da Lage and Grzybek wrote: "The generation in power has not yet forgotten that it came from the sands. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, sometimes portrayed as one of the richest men in the world, suffered from hunger in his childhood."³

Although the Prophet had foretold many of the events that came to pass exactly as he told them, then he never took credit for that to himself. Rather, he continued to attribute them to his Lord, who addressed him in the Koran as follows: "I do not say to you that I possess Allah's treasures or know the unseen."⁴

These are not Muhammad's only prophecies that have been fulfilled. These prayers, by the dozens, were also answered, as in this account by one of his closest companions, Abu

¹ *Golfe : le jeu des six familles*, Autrement, Paris, 1985, p. 75.

² *Ibid*, p. 78.

³ *Ibid*, p. 85.

⁴ Koran 6, 50.

Hurayrah:

"I never stopped calling my mother, then a pagan, to embrace Islam. One day, when I invited her to become a Muslim, she made hateful remarks about the Messenger of God, so I went to see him in tears."

When he was informed of the incident, the Prophet did not invoke God against her, but in her favor so that she would embrace Islam. No sooner had Abu Hurayrah returned to his mother's house than he found her taking a bath before her conversion to Islam. Then she pronounced before him the shahada¹ (attestation of Muslim faith).

¹ Muslim, 2491.

Chapter 2

The Revelations of the Koran

1- Announcement of future events

First announcement: the triumph of the Byzantines over the Persians.

The Romans have been defeated in a nearby land. Yet following their defeat, they will triumph within three to nine years. The 'whole' matter rests with God before and after 'victory'. And on that day the believers will rejoice at the victory willed by Allah. He gives victory to whoever He wills. For He is the Almighty, Most Merciful. (Koran 30:2-5)

This verse was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Makkah, that is, before 622 AH, the date of his emigration to Madinah. It mentions the defeat of the Byzantines at the hands of the Persians and then announces their triumph in less than ten years. The Arabic term "bid'a" used in the verse indicates, according to Arab linguists, a period ranging from three to nine or three to ten years. Denise Masson, in his translation of the Noble Koran, rightly states that: "The word "bid'a" applies to a number between three and nine; therefore, one could translate it as meaning a period less than ten years."¹

Philippe Conrad, historian and editor-in-chief of the *Nouvelle Revue d'Histoire*, described in an article entitled "*The Muslim Conquest of the East*," how the Eastern Roman Empire, totally crushed by the Persians, launched a counteroffensive by inflicting on its Persian enemy a first

¹ *Le Coran*, Masson, Bibliothèque de la pléiade, 1967, p. 906.

defeat in 622: "Chosroes II the Victorious attacked Byzantine Syria in 614, seized Edessa, Antioch, Damascus and Jerusalem from where he transported the Holy Cross to Ctesiphon, its capital on the banks of the Tigris. After having pushed his conquests as far as Egypt in 616, he directly threatened Asia Minor where he took Caesarea of Cilicia, before laying siege to Chalcedon, in the immediate vicinity of Constantinople. Remaining masters of the sea, the Byzantines succeeded to save their capital and could, from 622, to undertake the reconquest. Heraclius regained his grip on Asia Minor and Armenia while the death of Chosroes, which occurred in 628 and was followed by an epidemic of plague and catastrophic floods, was a prelude to the siege of Ctesiphon by the Byzantines who imposed peace and were given back the True Cross. After the remarkable triumphs recorded a few years earlier, the Sassanid Empire experienced a turnaround when, between 628 and 632, twelve sovereigns succeeded one another on its throne".

The Byzantines recorded their first victory over the Persians in 622 at Issus in Cilicia (Asia Minor). The Emperor Heraclius himself commanded the Byzantine army, while the Persian army was led by Shahrbaraz. So, 8 or 9 years elapsed between the Persian attack, which was mainly characterized by the symbolic takeover of Jerusalem, and the counterattack of the Byzantine army that recorded its first victory in Issus in 622. And that is precisely the time period in which the Qur'an stated that victory would be gained by the Byzantines, which was unthinkable a few years before the events.

In his reference book *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon describes, in the chapter entitled: *Distress of Heraclius*. A. D. 610-622, the state of the

Byzantine Empire on the eve of its victory over the Persians in 622: "Syria, Egypt, and the provinces of Asia, were subdued by the Persian arms, while Europe, from the confines of Istria to the long wall of Thrace, was oppressed by the Avars, unsatiated with the blood and rapine of the Italian war [...] By these implacable enemies, Heraclius, on either side, was insulted and besieged: and the Roman empire was reduced to the walls of Constantinople, with the remnant of Greece, Italy, and Africa, and some maritime cities, from Tyre to Trebizond, of the Asiatic coast. After the loss of Egypt, the capital was afflicted by famine and pestilence; and the emperor, incapable of resistance, and hopeless of relief, had resolved to transfer his person and government to the more secure residence of Carthage. His ships were already laden with the treasures of the palace; but his flight was arrested by the patriarch, who armed the powers of religion in the defence of his country; led Heraclius to the altar of St. Sophia, and extorted a solemn oath, that he would live and die with the people whom God had intrusted to his care.

After considering taking refuge in North Africa, Heraclius sought peace from the Persian emperor, who "specifies the annual tribute or ransom of the Roman empire; a thousand talents of gold, a thousand talents of silver, a thousand silk robes, a thousand horses, and a thousand virgins. Heraclius subscribed these ignominious terms; but the time and space which he obtained to collect such treasures from the poverty of the East, was industriously employed in the preparations of a bold and desperate attack", the English historian continues, summing up the state of mind of the Byzantines on the eve of their counteroffensive: "The only hopes of the Romans were drawn from the vicissitudes of fortune, which might threaten the proud prosperity of Chosroes, and must

be favorable to those who had attained the lowest period of depression."

In the chapter entitled: *First expedition of Heraclius against the Persians A. D. 622*, Gibbon describes in detail the first battle won by Heraclius in 622: "Cilicia was soon encompassed with the Persian arms; but their cavalry hesitated to enter the defiles of Mount Taurus, till they were circumvented by the evolutions of Heraclius, who insensibly gained their rear, whilst he appeared to present his front in order of battle. By a false motion, which seemed to threaten Armenia, he drew them, against their wishes, to a general action. They were tempted by the artful disorder of his camp; but when they advanced to combat, the ground, the sun, and the expectation of both armies, were unpropitious to the Barbarians; the Romans successfully repeated their tactics in a field of battle, 81 and the event of the day declared to the world, that the Persians were not invincible, and that a hero was invested with the purple. Strong in victory and fame, Heraclius boldly ascended the heights of Mount Taurus, directed his march through the plains of Cappadocia, and established his troops, for the winter season, in safe and plentiful quarters on the banks of the River of the Halys."¹

In his book Gibbon alludes to the Koranic prediction of the Byzantine victory while acknowledging that it is highly unlikely, at the time the verse was revealed, for the balance of power to turn in its favor. He writes: "Placed on the verge of the two great empires of the East, Mahomet observed with secret joy the progress of their mutual destruction; and in the midst of the Persian triumphs, he ventured to foretell, that

¹ Ibid.

before many years should elapse, victory should again return to the banners of the Romans. At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment, since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire."¹

And he adds in a footnote: "See the thirtieth chapter of the Koran, entitled the Greeks. Our honest and learned translator, Sale, (p. 330, 331,) fairly states this conjecture, guess, wager, of Mahomet; but Boulainvilliers, (p.329—344,) with wicked intentions, labors to establish this evident prophecy of a future event, which must, in his opinion, embarrass the Christian polemics."²

Gibbon alludes here to the book by the French historian Henri de Boulainvilliers, entitled *The Life of Muhammad (La Vie de Mahomed)* and more specifically to the following passage: "Thus I felt compelled to enter into the details of historical facts, which alone could make known the legitimate application of Muhammad's words. History teaches us, as we have already seen, that the Romans, after their successive defeats at the hands of the Persians from 615 AD until 625 AD, regained their supremacy for the first time and suddenly triumphed over their tough enemies by a blow that was not at all expected to the point that the memory of mankind did not record anything equal to it. It is still noteworthy that the ten-year interval, indicated by Muhammad, between the Defeat and the Victory, is rightly filled between 615 and 625. Therefore, it must be recognized that, if the 30th Chapter of the Alcoran was really compiled and made public in 615, the

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

fulfillment of the Prophecy contained therein cannot be denied."¹

Boulainvilliers thus acknowledges that the prediction of the Koran came true within the announced time frame, less than ten years, even if he proposes two different dates for the Byzantine defeat and victory, 615 and 625.

We conclude from the foregoing - and this is the point - that Boulainvilliers admits that the prediction of the Holy Qur'an was fulfilled in its date, that is, in less than ten years, even though two different dates are proposed by the author for the defeat then for the Byzantine victory, 615 and 625. As for his interpretation of this prediction by chance or by the vivacity of the imagination of the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), it is contradicted by his own words about the Byzantine military success described as «so unexpected that the memory of men knows no such thing". In addition, Muhammad had no interest in announcing this far-fetched victory because, if the fulfillment of this prediction was not so important to his message, its failure would have caused him to be stripped of all credibility and would have his mission put an end to.

Conversely, when he was asked about the date of the end of the world, Muhammad was commanded by his Lord to answer that he had no knowledge of it: They ask you regarding the Hour, "When will it be?" Say, "That knowledge is only with my Lord."² If he had been a false prophet, he would have taken no risk in announcing that the end of the world would

¹ *La Vie de Mahomed*, Henri de Boulainvilliers, P. Humbert, Amsterdam, 1730, p. 371-372.

² Koran 7, 187.

occur in hundreds, even thousands of years, as so many impostors after him, most of them Christians, will do. Instead, he took the risk of predicting the then unthinkable victory of a people unrelated to him.

Second announcement: the triumph of Islam.

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security - provided that they worship Me, associating nothing with Me. (Koran 24, 55)

The "miraculous" expansion of Islam has already been discussed in this section and in the preceding one, and will also be the subject of detailed study in the fourth section of this book. The passage mentioned here, however, raises two points. The first is that this verse was revealed in Madinah where the Muslims had just taken refuge after being compelled into exile by the pagans in Makkah and where they lived in constant fear of a possible enemy attack. The Muslims suffered a defeat in the year 625 at the foot of Mount Uhud, on the outskirts of Madinah, and seventy of them fell under the blows of the people of Makkah, before the alliance of the polytheistic tribes imposed a long siege on Madinah. The authority of the Muslims at that time did not extend beyond Madinah, as the first Muslim conquests did not begin until 634, that is, after the death of the Prophet in 632.

The second point is that God makes the fulfillment of his promise conditional on his exclusive worship: "*provided that they worship Me, associating nothing with Me*", says the Lord. It is well known that the decline of the Muslims only began when Muslims moved away from their religion.

Third announcement: the preservation of the Koran.

It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder, and it is certainly We Who will preserve it. (Koran 15, 9)

The Scottish orientalist, William Muir (1819-1905), wrote: "There is probably no book in the world that has preserved its original purity over such a long period of time as the Koran. It has stood unaltered for twelve centuries now."¹

Laura Veccia Vaglieri (1893-1989), an Italian orientalist, confirms this point of view in her book *An Interpretation of Islam*: "Another proof of the divine origin of the Koran is the fact that its text has been admirably preserved, without undergoing the slightest alteration, throughout the centuries from its revelation to the present day."²

As part of her doctoral thesis, Italian researcher Alba Fedeli studied a collection of more than 3000 books and documents from the Middle East belonging to the Library of the University of Birmingham and collected in the 1920s by Alphonse Mingana, a priest born near Mosul in northern Iraq. Inside one of the books, the female researcher discovered two leaves of a very old Koran. The University decided to carry out a carbon-14 dating process, the conclusions of which, according to the BBC, proved by 95.4% that these two fragments of parchment were at least 1370 years old. The manuscript is believed to have been written between 568 and 645 CE, making it one of the oldest copies of the Koran found so far. Let us remember that the Koran was revealed

¹ *The Life of Muhammad from Original Sources*, William Muir, John Grant, Edinburgh, 1923, Introduction, p. XXII–XXIII.

² *An Interpretation of Islam*, Laura Veccia Vaglieri, Goodword Books, New Delhi, 2004, p. 44.

between 610 and 632, the date of the Prophet's death.

In an article entitled *The Oldest Manuscripts of the Koran*, published on January 24, 2017 on the website of the Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies, Emilio Platti, professor at the Catholic University of Louvain, comments on this discovery: "Following the discovery of extremely ancient manuscripts of the Qur'an, and the carbon-14 dating of Birmingham folios between 568 and 645 (between 56 before the Hegira and 25 after), most contemporary scholars rejected the late dates of the oldest Qur'anic manuscripts proposed by John Wansbrough for example in His book "Qur'anic Studies" (Oxford University Press, 1977). Patricia Crone and Michael Cook also deny that there is any indication of the existence of the Qur'an before the end of the first/seventh century (Hagarism, Cambridge University Press, 1977). It would seem today that a better dating would be closer to the middle of the 1st/7th century, or even before that date."

Therefore, the oldest known copies of the Koran would date back to the middle of the first century AH, that is, from the middle of the seventh century in the Christian era, around the year 650. Since the Prophet died in 632, this text would have been recorded shortly after his death, and perhaps even during his lifetime. However, these manuscripts are completely identical to the texts of the modern Koran.

The same is true of the Sana'a manuscripts, discovered in 1972 in the Great Mosque of the Yemeni capital. Gerd-Rüdiger Puinest, a German specialist in Arabic paleography, was commissioned by the Yemeni government to restore the manuscripts for which he gave a carbon-14 dating from 657 to 690.

During a conference held on October 6, 2005 at Collège de France under the title *Origins of the Koran*, Manfred Kropp, a German Islamologist and former director of the German Institute for Oriental Studies in Beirut, stressed that the study of manuscripts reveal only rare errors, naturally caused by the copyists, and specified: "All that we see now, all these fragments have a coherence, a surprising stability. There is very little material difference in the Rasm, that is, in the consonantal skeleton of the Koranic text. The divergences are mainly about the separation of verses, the separation of suras, therefore of the different chapters, and the details of philological links. Otherwise it is really surprising how the text from the very beginning of its material attestation has an enormous, extraordinary stability."

François Déroche, professor at the Collège de France, where he has held *the chair of History of the Koran, Text and Transmission* since 2014, confirms that the Rasm of the Sana'a Manuscripts remains faithful to the corpus currently available, although there are manuscripts in which the suras are organized in different orders.¹

Among the oldest Koranic manuscripts known today is the codex Parisino-petropolitanus, a text of 98 leaves discovered at the beginning of the 19th century in Cairo, in a deposit of the great mosque of Fustat, of which the French National Library possesses 70 leaves. François Déroche, thanks to a paleographic study, traces this manuscript back to the third quarter of the seventh century (650 to 675 AD). Comparative studies of the codex with the present Koran were carried out in 1983 and in 2009. The text of the leaflets available at the

¹ *Dictionnaire du Coran*, Robert Laffont, Paris, 2007, p. 735-739.

Bibliothèque nationale de France does not differ greatly from this one. Mathieu Tillier, professor at the Sorbonne, confirms: "In the end, it appears that the studied codex corresponds, with some variations, to the Uthmanian vulgate"¹, that is, to the Koran available to Muslims today.

To some, the divine promise to preserve the Koran from tampering may seem like a simple matter and not a miracle in itself. However, no religious text, before the Koran, has come down to us in its original state, without distortion, starting with the Bible, whose critics are unanimous in saying that it has been corrupted over the centuries.

Bart Ehrman, a professor at the University of North Carolina School of Theology and a specialist in the New Testament, is the author of the best-selling book *Jesus, Interrupted*, in which he demonstrates that the Bible is full of obvious errors, inconsistencies and falsifications, but also that many of the stories and doctrines that underpin the Christian religion are not drawn from the Gospels. He explains, for example, that only 8 of the 27 books of the New Testament were actually written by the authors to whom they are attributed, the others being likely forgeries, that the Creed and the Trinity are late inventions, and that the suffering and divinity of Christ are not part of Jesus' teachings. Here is what he wrote about the transformations undergone by the Gospel: "We don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament. The copies we have were made much later, in most instances many centuries later. We have thousands of these copies, in Greek - the language in which of all the New Testament books were originally written. All of these copies

¹ *La Transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam. Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus*, Mathieu Tillier, Brill, Leyde-Boston, 2009.

contain mistakes - accidental slips on the part of the scribes who made them or intentional alterations by scribes wanting to change the text to make it say what they wanted it to mean (or thought that it did mean). We don't know how many mistakes there are among our surviving copies, but they appear to number in the hundreds of thousands. It is safe to put the matter in comparative terms: there are more differences in our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament."¹

These differences between manuscripts probably explain the significant discrepancies found in the translations of the Bible. To demonstrate this, we will limit ourselves to a passage from the New Testament whose meaning differs completely according to the translations we examined. John 9:35 is translated as follows by the Jerusalem Bible: "Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "The Ecumenical Bible Translation (EBT) also uses the expression "Son of Man", but Louis Segond translates the passage as follows: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The "Son of man" therefore became" the Son of God". The same goes for the famous King James English translation (the Son of God) or in the Spanish reference translation Reina-Valera (el Hijo de Dios). The difference is, however, great between "Son of God" which emphasizes the divinity of Jesus and "Son of Man" which highlights his purely human nature. In his book *The Bible, the Koran and Science*, Dr. Maurice Bucaille writes: "Thanks to its undisputed

¹ *Jesus, Interrupted, Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible*, Harper Collins, 2009, p. 183-184.

authenticity, the text of the Koran holds a unique place among the books of Revelation, shared neither by the Old nor the New Testament. In the first two sections of this work, a review was made of the alterations undergone by the Old Testament and the Gospels before they were handed down to us in the form we know today. The same is not true for the Koran for the simple reason that it was written down at the time of the Prophet."¹

This miraculous preservation of the Koranic text can be explained in large part by the countless number of Muslims who, from generation to generation, from the first companions of the Prophet to the present day, have memorized the Koran. Maurice Bucaille writes on this subject: "As the Revelation progressed, the Prophet and the believers following him recited the text by heart and it was also written down by the scribes in his following. It therefore starts off with two elements of authenticity that the Gospels do not possess. This continued up to the Prophet's death. At a time when not everybody could write, but everyone was able to recite, recitation afforded a considerable advantage because of the double-checking possible when the definitive text was compiled."²

This easiness with which the sacred text of the Muslims is memorized is the fulfillment of another promise of God who says: "And We have certainly made the Koran easy to remember. So, is there anyone who will be mindful?"³In fact,

¹ Maurice Bucaille, *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des connaissances modernes*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1978.

² *Ibid.*

³ Koran 54, 17.

the number of Muslims who know the Koran by heart is estimated to be in the millions. In a book published in 2008, William Cooper and Piyu Yue, estimated this figure to be as high as ten million: "The title of "Hafiz" is granted only to those Muslims who have proven the accuracy of their memorization by being asked to continue reading a random passage from the Koran. Currently, the number of Hafiz in the world is estimated to be over ten million. Muslim countries often hold Koran recitation contests. An Iranian boy came first in a recent contest held in Saudi Arabia and is believed to have become a Hafiz at the age of six."¹

As an indication, the Koran is divided into one hundred and fourteen suras containing no less than 6,236 verses, or more than 80,000 words. The Arabic text generally comprises six hundred pages which, on the nights of Ramadan, are recited from memory in the mosques, at a rate of twenty pages per day, by imams all over the world. In contrast, no one is known to have memorized even the Gospels, let alone the Bible.

Fourth announcement: Muhammad is the last of the prophets.

There is an announcement in the Qur'an that Muslim apologists rarely mention, however much important it is. God says: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets."² In fact, what should be considered as a prediction has indeed happened. No religion has been founded and no prophet has risen after him in the history of Mankind. On the other hand,

¹ *Challenges of the Muslim World: Present, Future and Past*, William Cooper et Piyu Yue, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2008, p. 194.

² Koran 33, 40.

Jesus, the last Jewish prophet, never claimed to be the last of the envoys. On the contrary he announced the advent of the Paraclete, the Son of Man, commissioned to intercede like him in favor of believers and to set up the "kingdom of God" on earth.

2- Revelation of past stories

Firstly: the creation of the universe.

Then He turned towards the heaven when it was 'still like' smoke, saying to it and to the earth, 'Submit, willingly or unwillingly.' They both responded, 'We submit willingly.' (Koran 41:11)

Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were 'once' one mass then We split them apart? (Koran 21:30)

These two verses describe, in a concise manner that corresponds to the level of knowledge of people at the time of their revelation, the process of the universe creation. They are, according to Dr. Maurice Bucaille, in complete agreement with the data of modern science. He wrote: "It must be noted however, that the formation of the heavenly bodies and the Earth, as explained in verses 9 to 12, sura 41 required two phases. If we take the Sun and its subproduct the Earth as an example (the only one accessible to us), science informs us that their formation occurred by a process of condensation of the primary nebula and then their separation. This is exactly what the Koran expresses very clearly when it refers to the processes that produced a fusion and subsequent separation starting from a celestial 'smoke'. Hence there is complete correspondence between the facts of the Koran and the facts of science. Science showed the interlocking of the two stages in the formation of a star (like the Sun) and its satellite (like

the Earth). This interconnection is surely very evident in the text of the Koran examined. The existence at an early stage of the Universe of the 'smoke' referred to in the Koran, meaning the predominantly gaseous state of the material that composes it, obviously corresponds to the concept of the primary nebula put forward by modern science".¹

Until recently, researchers called cosmic "dust" or cosmic "gas", as Maurice Bucaille does here, the cosmic smoke at the origin of the formation of stars and planets, the sun and the earth in particular², before analyzing some samples thereof and finding that the most appropriate expression to describe it was the word "smoke", which is precisely the term used in the Koran more than fourteen centuries ago (Koran 41, 11). Indeed, analyses have shown that the density of interstellar dust, of the same nature as the primitive nebula, is similar to that of "cigarette smoke".³

On his site entitled Astronomy and Astrophysics, Olivier Esslinger, PhD in Astrophysics, writes "these grains today constitute interstellar dust. Their average size is of the order of one millionth of a meter, similar, for example, to the size of cigarette smoke particles".

An article published on the site of the Astrophysical Laboratory in Marseille provides the same description of this cosmic dust: "The interstellar matter is (mainly) in the form

¹ Maurice Bucaille, *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des connaissances modernes*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1978.

² *L'origine de l'Univers*, Reeves, Horizons philosophiques, 1992, vol. 2, p. 21.

³ *Astronomie et astrophysique : Cinq grandes idées pour explorer et comprendre l'Univers*, Marc Séguin et Benoît Villeneuve, Renouveau pédagogique, 2002, p. 262-263.

of grains whose size is in the order of the wavelength of visible light, that is, a few hundred nanometers. Therefore, these grains contain a few tons of atoms at most. They are called grain or dust. But their size is closer to that of the particles that make up the smoke".

What is most surprising is that the Koranic account of the Creation does not include any of the myths that were in vogue at that time, most of which saw a primordial ocean as the origin of Creation. This how, for example, that the ancient Egyptians or the Mesopotamians explained the origin of Creation.

What about this story in the Bible? The first two verses of the Old Testament accurately describe the formation of the universe: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."¹

Maurice Bucaille comments on this story as follows: "It is quite possible to admit that before the Creation of the Earth, what was to become the Universe as we know it was covered in darkness. To mention the existence of water at this period is however quite simply pure imagination. It is probably the translation of a myth."²

The French doctor is just as harsh on the verses that immediately follow, still on the subject of Creation: "And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he

¹ Genesis 1, 1-2.

² Maurice Bucaille, *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des connaissances modernes*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1978.

called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning - the first day."¹ He writes: "At this stage in the Creation, however, according to the Bible, the stars were not yet formed. The 'lights' of the firmament are not mentioned in Genesis until verse 14, when they were created on the Fourth day, "to separate the day from the night", "to give light upon earth"; all of which is accurate. It is illogical, however, to mention the result (light) on the first day, when the cause of this light was created three days later. The fact that the existence of evening and morning is placed on the first day is moreover, purely imaginary; the existence of evening and morning as elements of a single day is only conceivable after the creation of the earth and its rotation under the light of its own star, the Sun!"²

These two examples taken from the very beginning of the Bible will suffice to demonstrate the difference between the Koranic account of the Creation, which is in no way in conflict with modern knowledge of the formation of the universe, and that of the Old Testament, which is unacceptable from a scientific point of view. Maurice Bucaille writes: Although not all the questions raised by the descriptions in the Koran have been completely confirmed by scientific data, there is in any case absolutely no opposition between the data in the Koran on the Creation and modern knowledge on the formation of the Universe. This fact is worth stressing for the Koranic Revelation, whereas it is very obvious indeed that the present-day text of the Old Testament provides data on the same events that are

¹ Genesis 1-3

² *Ibid.*

unacceptable from a scientific point of view."¹

Another passage of the Creation story proposed by the Bible is described as whimsical by Maurice Bucaille. It is the one that claims that God rested on the seventh day of the Creation², an idea that is explicitly rejected by the Koran in this verse: "Indeed, We created the heavens and the earth and everything in between in six Days, and We were not 'even' touched with fatigue."³ However, the biblical passage in question is only found in the priestly text of Creation, the Yahwist text, which, several centuries before it, makes no mention of the Sabbath of God who, tired of his work during the week, had to rest on the seventh day!

Second: the story of the biblical prophets.

The Koran mentions the main prophets of the Bible, which led some to speak of borrowing or even plagiarism. In fact, we will show that the Koran brings details that are not found in the biblical account and that it corrects the errors of the Bible, without ever endorsing the numerous mistakes, inconsistencies and contradictions of the Scriptures.

The French historian Henri de Castries (1850-1927), in his book on Islam, gave a compelling response to this accusation of plagiarism: "Muhammad is not an impostor, nor is he a plagiarist, nor a "prophet of plunder", as Mr. Sayous calls him. There are no doubt similarities between the Koran and some passages of the Scriptures, the reason being that Muhammad links the Islamic religion directly to Christianity and

¹ *Ibid.*

² Genesis 2, 2.

³ Koran 50, 38.

Judaism."¹

Geneviève Gobillot, professor of History of Arab-Muslim Thought at the University of Lyon 3, writes on this subject that one of the basic functions of the Koran is to guide the reading in order to sometimes confirm, sometimes bring out the truth of previous Scriptures. This seems to be the consensus in recent years among scholars of the Koranic text². Geneviève Gobillot explains this corrective role of previous Scriptures that the Koran has assigned itself: "The Koran proposes to move forward in this canon regarding a certain kind of wisdom. This set of texts cannot be read in just any way. It has to be read in terms of a certain kind of wisdom, and it is that wisdom that the Koran proposes to bring. In other words, it is a certain standard by which we can determine how to read these texts, i.e. how to separate a certain wheat from a certain chaff within them."³ She further adds: "The Koran offers its own criteria for reading these passages of the Scripture, which have often already been singled out by rabbis or by the Fathers of the Church, and it offers this rereading. But what is it? What is special about this rereading? It is special because it is brought by God."⁴

Through the example of the plagues of Egypt mentioned differently in the Old Testament and in the Koran, Geneviève Gobillot comments on the method used by the Koran: "It does not become God to commit premeditated murder or to

¹ *L'Islam : impressions et études*, Henry de Castries, A. Colin, Paris, 1907, p. 46.

² *Histoire et géographie sacrées dans le Coran, l'exemple de Sodome*, Geneviève Gobillot.

³ *Le Coran, guide de lecture des Ecritures*, Geneviève Gobillot, in *Quelle sagesse pour notre temps*, L'Harmattan, 2015.

⁴ *Ibid.*

do violence. So, the plagues of Egypt which are ten in the Bible become nine in the Koran, that is, no death of the elder sons of the children of Egypt, because God does not act like that. So, we have a whole series of criteria of this type which induce us to reread the texts, all the sacred texts of all the monotheisms of the time. The Koran comes as a reading guide. Some few words on the method: how does it propose to be a reading guide? Through the famous method of abrogation. What does this abrogation mean? We always tend to believe and even say that the Koran nullifies the previous texts. Yes, it cancels them! But what does that mean? This does not mean that it erased, rejected and put them aside, but rather that it came up with corrections, different various ways of reading them. How to read them? Abrogation and oblivion. This means that when something cannot be canceled and is truly shocking, such as the tenth plague in Egypt, we just forget it. We simply forget it. These are the two criteria by which the Koran deals with ancient texts.”

According to the French Islamologist, the Koran corrects the Bible either by rectifying its mistakes, as we will see in the story of Abraham's guests, or by ignoring them, such as the tenth plague in Egypt, the death of the first Egyptian births, all of which was not covered by the Koran text.

Before giving some examples of these corrections made by the Koran to the Bible, let us first explain how unfounded the accusation of plagiarism is. It was possible for the Prophet to use two types of sources for the supposed writing of these narratives, an Arabic translation of the Bible and oral teachings provided by Jews or Christians:

- *A written source:*

The earliest Arabic translations of the Bible date back at best to the 8th century of the Christian era, that is to say at least one century after the Prophet Muhammad's death. One can thus read in the *Vigouroux Bible Dictionary* about the first Arabic versions of the Bible: "In fact, the need for these versions did not appear until after the various provinces subject to Islam abandoned their original languages to adopt the language of their conquerors, i.e. between the eighth and tenth centuries of the Christian era. The Arabic versions were then undertaken by Jews and Christians."¹

These data are confirmed by Bruce Metzger, a well-known New Testament specialist, in his book *The Bible in Translation*. His confirmation of this came in the chapter he devoted to the Arabic versions of the Bible where he wrote: "We do not know who made the first translation of the Scriptures into Arabic. Traditional narratives attributed this honor to different people. All that can be asserted in this respect is that the first translations of the Bible into this language may date back to the eighth century."²

It is generally believed that the oldest Arabic version of the Bible, translated from the Septuagint, is that of Hunayn ibn Ishaq (808-873), and therefore dates back to the ninth century, but nothing of it has survived. The earliest known version is that of Saadia Gaon (882-942), an Egyptian Jew, who became the head of the rabbinic school of Babylon.

In addition, the Prophet of Islam was illiterate, like the vast

¹ *Dictionnaire de la Bible Vigouroux*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 845.

² *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions*, Bruce Metzger, Baker Academic, 2001, p. 46.

majority of Arabs of his time, as the Koran itself reminds us: "You could not read any writing 'even' before this 'revelation', nor could you write at all. Otherwise, the people of falsehood would have been suspicious."¹ Henry de Castries raises a fundamental point here when he wrote: "Muhammad could neither read nor write; he was, as he often repeated, an illiterate prophet. This assertion was not denied by any of his contemporaries and it was certainly not possible in the East, where people know everything about the lives of others, that he could have received, without the knowledge of others, an education."² This is a rule that must always be kept in mind. The Koran was recited during the prayers, learned by heart by many of the Companions and written down by some of them. The information it gives is therefore necessarily authentic, otherwise the contemporaries of the Prophet would have questioned it and his mission with it. Here is what Maurice Bucaille wrote on this subject: "We know that Muhammad and the Believers who surrounded him were accustomed to reciting the revealed text from memory. It is therefore inconceivable for the Koran to refer to facts that did not square with reality because the latter could so easily be checked with people in the Prophet's following, by asking the authors of the transcription."³

Henry de Castries adds: "It is more difficult to pass judgment on the question of the revelation of the Koran, which has never received a satisfactory explanation. How can

¹ Koran 29, 48.

² *L'Islam : impressions et études*, Henry de Castries, A. Colin, Paris, 1907, p. 33.

³ Maurice Bucaille, *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des connaissances modernes*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1978.

one attribute to the purely human inspiration of an illiterate person these pages that the whole of the East proclaims to be the inimitable masterpiece for thought as well as for form."¹ A few lines further on he asks: "How could the Prophet have made up this book in an exclusively literary language which, like Latin in the Middle Ages, was known and understood only by cultivated minds?"²

In his *Introduction to Islam*, Lucien Ferré confirms: "His messenger was extra-intelligent, keen-understanding, strong-memory and illiterate from the start. Whatever the case, chapters and verses were instantly memorized by him, then recited and transcribed by his revelation scribes and immediately made public and promulgated on the occasion of all religious services or worship rituals. Moreover, how slanderous and meaningless are the accusations levelled against him describing him as an impostor or plagiarist or the author of the Koran."³

The Swiss journalist Roger du Pasquier, author of *Découverte de l'islam*, writes similarly: "That the revelation of the Koran was and remains the basic miracle of Islam. No one has yet been able to reasonably explain how an illiterate caravan man in the early seventh century could produce, by his own means, a text of such incomparable beauty and ability to move souls, with a degree of knowledge and wisdom far exceeding the knowledge and ideas of the people of his day. The studies conducted in the West in an attempt to identify the sources from which Muhammad could have derived what he had or

¹ *L'Islam : impressions et études*, Henry de Castries, A. Colin, Paris, 1907, p. 38.

² *Ibid*, p. 40.

³ *Introduction à l'islam*, Lucien Ferré, Publisud, Paris, 1990, p. 62.

to demonstrate the psychological phenomenon by which he drew his inspiration from his "unconscious" have never proved but one thing: the anti-Muslim prejudice of their authors."¹

- *An oral source:*

After recounting the story of Mary in the Koran, God addressed the Prophet in the following terms: "This is one of the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you 'O Prophet'. Neither you nor your people knew it before this."² Here again, the Koranic statement that these events were unknown to the Prophet and to his people is necessarily authentic because it can be easily verified by his contemporaries. In addition, Makkah or Madinah, at the time of the Prophet, are cities where thousands of people lived and knew each other. Here is an excerpt from the article on Makkah in the *Encyclopædia Universalis*: "The city of Makkah, far from being a state, is merely a grouping of clans belonging to one common ancestor, Kuraysh, bound by economic interests that impose a certain unity."

Moreover, who, apart from the Jews and Christians of the Arabian Peninsula, could be a source from which the Prophet could draw information? The texts do not mention the presence of Jewish or Christian communities in Makkah, where the majority of the Koran was revealed (86 suras out of 114), in particular most of the narratives relating to the biblical prophets, and where the greater part of its preaching was held, thirteen years out of twenty-three. On the other hand, large Jewish communities were in Madinah when he arrived in the

¹ *Découverte de l'islam*, Roger du Pasquier, Les trois continents, 1985, p. 63.

² Koran 3, 44.

city where he preached Islam in the last ten years of his life, during which only 28 suras were revealed to him. Moreover, the Jews never hid their hostility to Muhammad and to Islam during his mission. If he had received information from them before declaring himself a prophet, they would not hesitate to reveal the matter, rather they would blatantly say that they were the ones who taught him.

Let us now mention some of these Koranic accounts of the biblical prophets, highlighting what differentiates them from similar accounts in the Bible.

- **The story of Adam:** The story of the fall of Adam, driven out of the Garden of Eden for eating from the forbidden tree, is well known. And although the accounts of the Koran and the Bible regarding this story are similar, there are nonetheless significant differences between them.

1. What is the forbidden tree?

According to the Bible, this tree is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."¹ Therefore, Adam and Eve were punished and driven out of Paradise for wanting to know good and evil, a punishment that seems to be very severe!

The Koran explains the original sin in a much more logical way: "But Satan whispered to him, saying: "O Adam! Shall I show you the Tree of Immortality and a kingdom that does not fade away?"² According to the Koran, the original sin is the desire to be eternal as God is. Furthermore, the serpent

¹ Genesis 2, 17.

² Koran 20, 120.

promised Eve that if she ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, she would "become like God".

2. Which one committed the sin first?

According to the Bible, it is Eve who, seduced by the snake, was the first to eat the forbidden fruit, before seducing Adam: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat ate it."¹ The woman is even very severely punished for what she did: she will give birth in pain and live under the domination of her husband: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee over you."²

On the other hand, according to the Koran, Adam and Eve are associated in sin, with no difference being made between man and woman: "But Satan deceived them—leading to their fall from the 'blissful' state they were in."³

3. Who is the tempter?

According to the Bible, the serpent is the one that tempted Eve, while, according to the Koran, the one that tempted both Adam and Eve is Satan.

4. Was the original sin forgiven?

As we have just seen, Eve and the women after her will

¹ Genesis 3, 6

² Genesis 3, 16

³ Koran 2, 36

forever suffer the consequences of the original sin. The same is true of Adam and the men after him, who were condemned to a life of toil to make a living from the earth: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."¹ But according to Christians, all these punishments are not enough to appease the wrath of God who must send his one and only Son to die on earth in order to atone for the original sin passed on by Adam and Eve to their posterity: this is the dogma of the Redemption.

The Koran offers a completely different version: after being driven out of Paradise, Adam repented of his sin and implored his Lord to forgive him, which He did: "So, Adam disobeyed his Lord, and so lost his way. Then his Lord chose him 'for His grace', accepted his repentance, and guided him rightly."²

5. How long did Adam live?

Adam lived, according to the Bible, nine hundred and thirty years, which may seem a long time for someone whom God had threatened in this way: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."³ This story is completely absent from the Koran.

- The story of Noah

This is one of the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you. Neither

¹ Genesis 3, 17.

² Koran 20, 121-122

³ Genesis 2, 17.

you nor your people knew it before this. (Koran 11, 49)

It is immediately after the story of Noah that this verse is revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Here again, differences can be noted between the biblical account of Noah and the Flood and that of the Koran.

1. The Cause of the Flood.

According to the Bible, it is after repenting of having created mankind, whose "wickedness was great on the earth", that God submerged it under the flood: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth."¹

The Koran was careful not to issue such an explanation, since it is more logical to ascribe repentance to a person, as the Koran did in the story of Adam, instead of attributing it to God, as the Bible did in the story of Noah.

2. Was the Flood global or limited?

The terms of the above-mentioned Bible passage indicate that the Flood engulfed the whole earth and all the people. However, there are no archaeological or historical remains of a flood that overwhelmed the planet's surface. The Koranic narration, consistent with historical data, indicates that the floods were confined to the people of Noah who alone were swallowed up.

3. Noah got drunk.

Immediately after the story of the Flood, the Bible describes

¹ Genesis 6, 6-7.

an episode in which Noah drank and was completely naked: "He drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren outside. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid *it* upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father."¹ Noah cursed Ham for the only crime he committed, which is that he saw his father's shame and informed his brothers of it. Important clarification: Ham is described here as "Father of Canaan", one of the staunchest enemies of Israel, a resident of the land of Canaan, the current Palestine, which the Hebrew people later seized by force.

The Koran, which describes the prophets with the greatest respect, did not mention this episode.

- The story of Abraham

We will now deal with the story of the guests of Abraham as told in the Bible and in the Koran: "ground, And Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sa rah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree,

¹ Genesis 9, 21-23.

and they did eat."¹

Here is the same story as related in the Koran: "And surely Our messenger-angels came to Abraham with good news of a son. They greeted him with, "Peace!" And he replied, "Peace be upon you!" Then it was not long before he brought them a fat, roasted calf. And when he saw that their hands did not reach for the food, he became suspicious and fearful of them. They reassured him, "Do not be afraid! We are angels sent only against the people of Lot."²

Two distinct differences emerge when reading these two stories. The first is the number and nature of these personalities hosted by Abraham and the second, their reaction to the meal served to them.

In the Bible, they are described as three men, but Abraham prostrates himself before them and then calls out to them, saying: "My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight"³, as if he was addressing one person. The story gets complicated at the very beginning of the next chapter, when we are told that they are more than two and that they are angels."⁴ Some questions arise here: Did Abraham receive a visit from one, two or three people? How could the great patriarch prostrate himself before men or even angels? How could those who were obviously angels eat from the meal that Abraham served them?

The Koran overcomes these contradictions and answers these incongruities by simply presenting these visitors as

¹ Genesis 18, 2-8.

² Koran 11, 69-70.

³ Genesis 18, 3.

⁴ Genesis 19, 1.

"messengers" of God, that is, angels whose number is not specified. On the other hand, the Koranic account specifies very logically that the angels did not touch the meal, which frightened Abraham, who was soon reassured by his guests.

Here is Geneviève Gobillot's commentary on this story: "In the text of the Torah, when the messengers came to Abraham, he slaughtered a calf in their honor and they ate of it. The question was then raised by many rabbis who asked: "Can these apostles be angels? Who are these messengers? They have eaten." Little by little, and over time, we come to the idea that they can only be angels, but it was very annoying. So, an apocrypha, like for example the Testament of Abraham, tried to solve the issue by saying: "These angels were very annoyed when Abraham brought them this calf and said to God: But what are we to do? Abraham brings us a calf, you know that we cannot eat, we are pure spirits. So, what are we going to do? And God said to them, "Don't worry! You are going to touch the food with your hands and the moment you touch it, I will send an eating spirit that will make the calf disappear". And then, even more miraculously, Sarah will see the calf come back to life. There, we have a whole theme on the issue of the killed meat of the animals, etc., since afterwards the calf will go to suckle its mother. But the problem in the Testament of Abraham is that it says, "You will touch the meat and it will disappear". As for the Koran it has a logic; there is a very absolute logic in the Koran that makes that not work: if these people do not have bodies, if they are really angels then they cannot touch the food let alone eat it. So, the Koran is very clear: they did not touch it, they did not eat it. This is the kind of very subtle corrections and abrogations that nonetheless

lead much further."¹

- The story of Lot

1. Lot proposes his daughters to the Sodomites.

According to the biblical narration, two angels came to visit Lot and he welcomed them into his home. When the Sodomites knew this, they came to urge him to surrender his guests to them to practice debauchery with them. So, Lot offered them his own daughters: "Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes."²The problem is that, a few lines later, we learn that Lot's two daughters were married or at least engaged. "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city."³Whether Lot's only two daughters are married to these men, or only engaged, how can he offer them to the Sodomites? Of course, the Koran did not address the issue of Lot's famous in-laws.

2. Lot's incestuous relationships with his daughters.

There is also another episode that is totally absent from the Koran. It is Lot's incestuous relationship with his two daughters. Their husbands, or fiancés, having died in the sinful city which they refused to leave despite Lot's advice, the two daughters of the patriarch, fearing not to marry after the death of the men, decided to get their father drunk before

¹ *Le Coran, guide de lecture des Ecritures*, Geneviève Gobillot, in *Quelle sagesse pour notre temps*, L'Harmattan, 2015.

² Genesis 19, 8.

³ Genesis 19, 14.

having relations with him: "And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father our father."¹.

On the other hand, in the Koran, Lot's story ends with the destruction of Sodom. The biblical narration is obviously considered a pure invention by Muslims who point out that the two sons born according to the Bible from these incestuous unions, Moab and Ben-Ammi, are the ancestors of two peoples who were among the fiercest enemies of the Jewish people: the Moabites and the Ammonites!

- The story of Joseph

That is from the stories of the unseen which We reveal to you O Prophet. You were not present when they all made up their minds, and when they plotted against Joseph. (Koran 12, 102)

We also note here some differences between the story of Joseph as related in the Bible and as told by the Koran, as well as some errors in the narration of the Bible, which do not appear in the koranic text.

1. Reprimand or recommendation?

When Joseph narrated his dream - in which he sees the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowing down before him - to his brothers and to his father, the latter rebuked him, saying: "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves

¹ Genesis 19, 31-32.

to thee to the earth?"¹

Jacob's reaction, as described in the Koran, was very much in line with his position as patriarch. He gave him advice that is brimming with wisdom: "O my dear son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, or they will devise a plot against thee."²

2. Who offers to save Joseph and who buys him?

In Genesis 37, 21, we are told that Reuben was the one who suggested saving the life of his brother Joseph and to content with throwing him into a cistern. But a few lines later³, we are surprised to read that it is no longer Reuben, but his brother Judah who proposes to sell, rather than to kill, Joseph.

The Koranic story does not resort to this recapitulation, giving neither the name of the brother with the heroic role, nor the identity of those who will finally buy Joseph. As for the Bible, in a new recapitulation, it identifies them first of all as Ishmaelites⁴, then in the next verse as Midianites⁵.

3. Was the tunic torn or taken off?

According to the Bible version, when Potiphar's wife wanted to seduce Joseph, she "caught him by his garment, saying, lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out the house."⁶ A surreal scene that is hard to imagine!

¹ Genesis 37, 10.

² Koran 12, 5.

³ Genesis 37, 26-27.

⁴ Genesis 37, 27

⁵ Genesis 37, 28

⁶ Genesis 39, 12.

As for the narration of the scene itself, according to what is mentioned in the Koran, it seems much more realistic: "They raced for the door and she tore his shirt from the back."¹

4. Is Joseph proven innocent?

Some Bible commentators point out that Joseph's story in the Bible "remains somewhat incomplete because the woman's lie is neither discovered nor condemned."²

On the other hand, in the Koranic story, Joseph's innocence is established precisely because of the tunic torn from behind: "It is she who tried to seduce me," Joseph defended himself. A relative of the wife said: "If his shirt is torn from the front, then she has told the truth and he is a liar. But if it is torn from the back, then she has lied and he is truthful."³

5. Eastern wind or southern wind?

The Bible mentioned one of the dreams of the king of Egypt as follows: "So Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them."⁴ The same dream in the Koran reads as follows: "And 'one day' the King said: "I dreamt of seven fat cows eaten up by seven skinny ones; and seven green ears of grain and 'seven' others dry."⁵

The Bible states that the ears of corn are burned by the "east

¹ Koran 12, 25.

² *Annuaire du Collège de France 2015-2016. Résumé des cours et travaux, 116^e année*, Paris, Collège de France, juin 2018, p. 243-260.

³ Koran 12, 26

⁴ Genesis 41, 5.

⁵ Genesis 41, 4-6.

wind," a statement not found in the Koran. However, critics of the Bible point out that the wind that dries up the crops in Egypt is the wind from the south, coming from the desert. It is not in Egypt, but in Palestine, that the east wind dries up the crops.¹

6. King of Egypt or Pharaoh?

In the previous passage of the Bible, the king of Egypt bears the title "Pharaoh", while he is called "king" in the same passage of the Koran. However, most commentators place Joseph's presence in Egypt during the reign of the Hyksos, Asian populations who invaded the Nile Delta and took power in that region. As foreign invaders, the Hyksos were ruled by kings, not pharaohs, titles held by Egyptian rulers. In any case, it is said that six of these foreign kings ruled over part of Egypt for a little more than a century before the southern Egyptian princes drove them out. Clearly highlighting the difference between the Hyksos "kings" and the Egyptian "pharaohs", the French Egyptologist Pierre Montet writes in *Egypt and the Bible*, about Joseph: "His death occurred after the expulsion by Ahmose of the Hyksos from Avaris and from all the lands of Egypt in 1580. Thus, Joseph's career coincided with the last Hyksos kings and the first Pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty."²

The following is an excerpt from the *Encyclopaedia Universalis* article on these populations:

The Hyksos is the name given by the Egyptian historian Manéthon (third century BC) to the Asian invaders who ruled

¹ Osée 13, 15 ; Ezéchiel 17, 10.

² *L'Égypte et la Bible*, Pierre Montet, Cahiers d'archéologie biblique n°11, Delachaux & Niestlé, Neuchâtel (Suisse), 1959, p. 21.

Egypt from around 1730 to 1560 BC. The Jewish historian Flavius Josèphe who lived in the first century of our era preserved for us paragraphs in which Maninto mentioned the invasion of the Hyksos. "Unexpectedly, men of unknown race, coming from the east, dared to invade our country [Egypt], and they seized it by force without resistance or fighting. All these people were called *Hyksos*, meaning "shepherds - kings" as the word *Hyk* in the holy language, means "King", while *sos*, in the vulgar language, means "shepherd".

Other commentators translate the term "*Hyksos*" with the words "foreign kings". Whatever the case, we note that the very etymology of the term Hyksos refers to them as kings rather than as pharaohs. Professor J. Vercoutter comments on this historical error in the Bible, saying: "The mention of" Pharaoh "in the time of Joseph is as anachronistic as the use of the word "Elysee" to refer to the palace of the King of France during the reign of Louis XIV."¹

On the other hand, in the story of Moses, the Koran, in accordance with historical data, quite rightly gives the title of Pharaoh to the sovereign who reigned at that time, probably Ramses II, then to his son Mineptah.

7. Another anachronism?

The mention of Rameses in this other passage of Genesis constitutes another anachronism: "And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses."² Therefore, one can read in the *Dictionary of the Bible*

¹ *Encyclopædia Universalis*, 1973, vol. 12, p. 915.

² Genesis 47, 11.

by André-Marie Gérard: "It is anachronistic that the priestly document uses the phrase "the land of Rameses" to describe the area in which Joseph placed his father "in the best part of the land" : the Pharaoh of that time has not yet held the title of Rameses."¹

8. Did Joseph's dream come true?

Only the Koran states that Joseph's dream was fulfilled: "When they entered Joseph's presence, he received his parents graciously and said, "Enter Egypt, Allah willing, in security." Then he raised his parents to the throne, and they all fell down in prostration to Joseph, who then said, "O my dear father! This is the interpretation of my old dream. My Lord has made it come true."²

9. Was Joseph's mother dead or alive?

According to the Bible, Joseph's mother was already dead at that time: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem."³

On the other hand, the Koranic verse referred to earlier indicates that she was alive. Now, the dream that Joseph has at the beginning of this story, found in the Bible as well as in the Koran, seems to confirm the opinion that Joseph's mother was alive, because he sees in his dream his father, symbolized by the sun, his mother, represented by the moon, and his eleven brothers, the eleven stars, prostrating themselves

¹ *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 1174.

² Koran 12, 99-100.

³ Genesis 35, 18-19.

before him, a dream that is logically fulfilled in Egypt in the Koranic story.

- The story of Moses

You were not there 'O Prophet' on the western side of the mountain when We entrusted the Commandments to Moses, nor were you present 'in his time'. (Koran 28:44)

Here again a careful study of the stories of Moses in Egypt, as related in the Bible and in the Koran, makes it possible to prove that the Koran sometimes corrects the Bible and sometimes come up with clarifications that were absent from it, avoiding repetition of the biblical text errors. Let us mention five examples of this.

1. How many Hebrews participated in the Exodus?

The Bible states that a very large number of Hebrews followed Moses on his way out of Egypt: "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children."¹

Before that, Genesis specifies the number of Hebrews who accompanied Jacob to Egypt: "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six."² In fact, the period that the Hebrews spent in Egypt between their arrival in the time of Joseph and their departure with Moses is estimated to be about 400 years. How was the Jacob family able to multiply in these proportions, to reach during this period hundreds of thousands or even millions of

¹ Exodus 12, 37.

² Genesis 46, 26.

individuals?!

André-Marie Gérard can but admit in his *Dictionary of the Bible*: "The evaluation of the "sons of Israel" involved in the holy adventure must be taken as epic in style: "600,000 men" in a condition to campaign, according to the author of the priestly document. This would imply, if one counts the women, children, elderly and persecuted people of all origins who took the opportunity to flee with them to escape their wretchedness, that between two and three million people left Egypt with Moses, that is to say, more than half of the country's population according to the most generous estimates: enough to constitute, in rows of ten, without herds, mounts or baggage, a column whose head would have reached the southern tip of the Sinai before the rearguard crossed the Red Sea."¹

The Koran, for its part, ascribes these words to Pharaoh who describes the small number of Hebrews who fled: "And We inspired to Moses, "And We inspired Moses, 'saying,' "Leave with My servants at night, for you will surely be pursued." 'Then Pharaoh sent mobilizers to all cities, 'and said,' "These 'outcasts' are just a handful of people band."²

2. Has the body of Pharaoh been found?

Although the Scriptures mention the death of this Pharaoh, who was swallowed up by the waters, they make no reference to the fate of his body: "And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so

¹ *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 372.

² Koran 26, 52-54.

much as one of them."¹ And in the Psalms: "But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea."²

On the other hand, the Koran provides an important clarification regarding the fate of Pharaoh's corpse mentioned in the Exodus. God says: "Today We will preserve your corpse so that you may become an example for those who come after you."³

It is well known today that the mummified bodies of the Egyptian Pharaohs were preserved, particularly that of Rameses II, believed to be the Pharaoh of oppression, and his son Mineptah, considered to be the Pharaoh who perished in the Red Sea. But the bodies of these pharaohs were, at the time of the revelation of the Koran, still in the Necropolis of Thebes, and their mummies were not discovered until the end of the 19th century. Thus, in 1898, Loret discovered the mummified body of Mineptah, son of Ramses II, in Thebes in the Valley of the Kings. These mummies were later displayed in the Royal Mummy Hall of the Cairo Museum, in accordance with the Koran, which states that the body of the pharaoh was thrown to serve as "an example for those who come after you".

3. Has Pharaoh been deified?

The answer to this question is well known today thanks to Egyptology: "The Pharaoh, the absolute hereditary ruler, was originally thought to be the falcon god Horus. Later he was equated with Re, the sun god. Nevertheless, he is honored as

¹ Exodus 14, 28.

² Psalms 136, 15.

³ Koran 10, 92.

a god."¹ But he was not so at the time the Koran was revealed. Yet, this reality is reflected in the sacred book of Muslims where Pharaoh claims: "I am your lord, the most high!"² The Koran is even more explicit in showing that not only was the Pharaoh of Moses a god made man, but that he himself, along with his people, worshipped other deities: "The chiefs of Pharaoh's people protested: "Are you going to leave Moses and his people free to spread corruption in the land and abandon you and your gods?"³ It is known that Rameses II, the Pharaoh of oppression, revered the great gods of the Empire: Amun, Ra, Ptah and Osiris. Rather than eradicating their cult as Akhenaten did, he confirmed their pivotal role in the economic and spiritual life of the country, while at the same time setting up his own cult. The verse can hardly be more accurate in its description of the Egyptian cult at that time: the Egyptians worshipped Pharaoh, but also other deities that their sovereign himself revered. The most startling thing is that the Bible, a religious book that is supposed to fight idolatry, makes no reference to either of these pagan cults.

4. Did Moses see his Lord?

Here is the Old Testament story: "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness."⁴

According to the belief of Muslims, it is not possible to see

¹ *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 1089-1090.

² Koran 79, 24.

³ Koran 7, 127.

⁴ Exodus 24, 9-10.

God on earth, but only believers will see Him in Paradise. Indeed, it is this vision that will bring the greatest felicity to the chosen ones in Paradise. Neither Moses nor Muhammad, nor any other prophet was able to see God during their life on earth. Here is the story of the ascent of Moses on Mount Sinai, according to what was mentioned in the Koran: "When Moses came at the appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he asked, "My Lord! Reveal Yourself to me so I may see You." Allah answered, "You cannot see Me! But look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place, only then will you see Me." When his Lord appeared to the mountain, He levelled it to dust and Moses collapsed unconscious. When he recovered, he cried, "Glory be to You! I turn to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers."¹ The New Testament confirms this Koranic account, since we can read in John 1, 18 that "No man hath seen God at any time".

5. Was Aaron the one who forged the Golden Calf?

According to the Scriptures, Aaron himself was the one who went, in the absence of Moses, to receive the Tables of the Law on Sinai, forged the Golden Calf: "And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf."²

How could Aaron, who is considered by the Jews as the first high priest in their history and by the Muslims as a prophet, violate the second commandment of the Law that Moses received on Mount Sinai? "Thou shalt not make unto thee any

¹ Koran 7, 143

² Exode 32, 3-4.

graven image, or any likeness of anything."¹

The Koran therefore exculpates Aaron and attributes this crime to a figure called Samiri: "Allah responded: "We have indeed tested your people in your absence, and the Sâmiri has led them astray "by inciting them to worship the Golden Calf". "²

Chapter 3

What about Bible announcements?

Although detractors of Islam challenge the authenticity of some of the prophecies of the Koran or of the prophet of Islam, one thing is certain: Muhammad never made a prophecy that did not come true. Otherwise, his followers would have denied his mission and his opponents pointed out these errors, as did Bible critics such as Abraham Kuenen (1828-1891), who pieced together the biblical prophecies that were not fulfilled. The Dutch critic has in fact demonstrated, by studying the predictions contained in the canonical books and relating in particular to the neighboring peoples of Israel and the destinies of the chosen people (the messianic prophecies), that the greatest number of these prophecies have never been accomplished.³ Here are some of these

¹ Exodus 20, 4.

² Koran 20, 85.

³ *Dictionnaire de la Bible Vigouroux*, vol. 5, part 1, 731-732.

biblical oracles.

1. To punish him for having killed his brother Abel, God says to Cain: "a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."¹ Now, a few lines later, we are surprised to learn that "Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he built a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch."²

2. The Lord said: "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years."³

These words spoken by the Lord during the era of Noah were not fulfilled because many people, according to the writers of the Bible, lived for a much longer period, starting with Noah himself who lived nearly a thousand years: "And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died."⁴

3. For thus saith the LORD: "That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."⁵

This oracle of Jeremiah, relating to the duration of the deportation of the Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon, did not come true insofar as, between the seizure of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC and the edict of Cyrus in 538 marking the return of the Hebrew people from exile, some

¹ Genesis 4, 12.

² Genesis 4, 16-17

³ Genesis 6, 3.

⁴ Genesis 9, 29.

⁵ Jeremiah 29, 10.

fifty, not seventy years, have elapsed.

4. "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them", saith the LORD thy God.¹

Amos, the author of this oracle which foretells to the Jews that they will never be expelled again from their land, lived in the eighth century B.C. Now, as we have just seen, the Hebrew people were deported two centuries later to Babylon.

5. "And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be *a place* to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD. Thus, saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus"².

According to this prophecy of Ezekiel, the city of Tyre was never to be rebuilt again after its destruction by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar. The city of Tyre, in the south of Lebanon, had a population of about 150,000 in 2020.

6. Jesus announces to his disciples that he must die and resurrect three days later³. However, according to John's account, Jesus was buried on Friday night and his tomb was found empty before dawn the following Sunday. So, Jesus would not have remained in the earth for three days and three nights, but only for one day and two nights.

¹ Amos 9, 15.

² Ezekiel 26 :14-15.

³ Mark 8, 31.

Part Three

The message of a prophet

Introduction

The message of the Prophet is composed of both the Koranic text, the word of God revealed to him by the angel Gabriel, and the Sunna (tradition), a compilation of Muhammad's sayings, collected by his companions and which, for Muslims, are of divine inspiration, without being, like the Koranic verses, the word of God. Therefore, the Sunnah is similar to the Bible, which Christians consider a divine revelation. As for the Koran, the eternal uncreated word of God, it has no equivalent. Only the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments engraved on the tables that God gave to Moses on Sinai, can be compared to it, since it is considered to be the word of God in its form as well as in its content. The message of Islam, with its two sources, the Koran and the Sunnah, too voluminous to be fully addressed here, will only be studied from two angles: its coherence and its influence. What distinguishes it is its complete coherence because, unlike the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, it is totally free of any contradiction. Far from opposing these messages, it seeks to restore the Abrahamic religion in all its purity as well as the authentic message of the biblical prophets. Besides, the Koran contradicts neither science, nor reason, nor history. Therefore, it is a text that has been preserved from any error and any inconsistency. Indeed, "Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies".¹ Another characteristic of the Koranic message that proves its authenticity is the influence it has always had on souls and spirits, whether by its content, of incomparable wisdom, or by its form, of inimitable beauty. In

¹ Koran 4, 82.

particular, we will show the powerful influence of the Muslim religion, the Koran in particular, on unitarist thought and on certain individuals, such as the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

Chapter 1

The Koran and the Sunnah

1- The Koran

The time of the Koranic revelation

The Koranic revelation, as we have pointed out, comes in particular to correct the errors of previous Scriptures. The Koran was indeed revealed at a time when humanity was most in need of receiving the word of God in its original and pure form from any distortion. The Hebrew people had rejected the last of the prophets who had been sent to them, Jesus, to urge them to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Also, the Christians, under the influence of Paul and then Constantine, had distorted his message, as we will show in the following pages. God, therefore, calls the Jews and the Christians to follow the prophet Muhammad who came to convey to them his true teachings: "O People of the Book! Our Messenger has indeed come to you, making things clear to you after an interval between the messengers so you do not say: "There has never come to us a deliverer of good news or

a warner.”¹

Perfectly describing the state of decline reached by human civilizations shortly before the advent of Islam, the French orientalist Jules La Beume (1806-1876) wrote: "To understand the spirit of preaching, it is necessary to know who really was the preacher, and to appreciate his true value, it is necessary to study the human conditions he is exposed to. The world was full of unrest in the sixth century of the Christian era, around the time of Muhammed's birth."² He adds a few lines later: "However, one corner of the world remained isolated from this movement, not because of the wisdom of its people, but because of its remote location from the roads followed by the so-called civilized nations. The Arabian Peninsula could only hear from afar, and very faintly, the strongest outbursts of the storms that rumbled in Europe."³

The place of the Koranic revelation

Arabia, as we showed in the first part of this book, holds a pivotal place in the history of salvation. We then cited this comment by Alexandre Westphal in his *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*: "The Hebrew people may have exited from Arabia at a similar time, just as Islam arouse out centuries later of the desert. They migrated north and became part of the northern Semitic peoples, distinct from the Sabeans or the southern branch of the Semites. The Hebrew nation thus had an "Arab" origin."

¹ Koran 5, 19.

² Le Koran analysé d'après la traduction de M. Kasimirski et les observations de plusieurs autres savants orientalistes, Jules La Beume, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1878, p. 6.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte did not hesitate to affirm: "The three religions that spread the knowledge of an immortal, uncreated God, master and creator of men emerged from Arabia. Moses, Jesus Christ and Muhammad are Arabs, born respectively in Memphis, Nazareth and Makkah. Europe, Asia, Africa and America, which contain many extensive deserts, high mountains, vast seas, rich plains, and major metropolises, implore Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad and get inspired by the holy books, the Gospel or the Koran, and have their eyes turned towards Arabia, Jerusalem, Nazareth or Makkah."¹

As we have just seen from the words of Jules La Beume, the center of Arabia was a virgin land isolated from the world. Closed to all outside influences, this corner of the planet was the ideal place to receive the Revelation. Nevertheless, the Arabian Peninsula was at the heart of the ancient world and at the crossroads of the three continents known at that time, namely Asia, Europe and Africa: "The Arabian Peninsula somehow located in the middle of the ancient world resembles the large continent of Africa of which it is a neighbor."²

The inimitability of the Koran

The inimitability of the Koran, both in form and content, is a well-known Muslim dogma. Henry de Castries wrote about the Koranic revelation: "How can one attribute to a purely human inspiration these pages which the whole East claims to be a masterpiece that cannot be matched neither in thought

¹ *Guerre d'Orient, campagnes d'Egypte et de Syrie*, Paris, 1847, vol. 1, p. 210.

² *Porte-feuille géographique et ethnographique*, Engelmann et Berger, Paris, 1820, p. 20.

nor in form."¹ This dogma is based in particular on a number of Koranic verses in which the ungodly are challenged to produce a text identical to that of the Koran, or even a single sura, such as this verse: "And if you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a sūrah like it and call your helpers other than Allah, if what you say is true."² To this day, no one has been able to take up this challenge to mankind.

The inimitability of the Koran, "an inimitable masterpiece in thought as well as in form", writes Henry de Castries, is to be compared with the vulgarity of certain passages of the Bible and the absurdity of some of its laws. A single example will be enough to show this: "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that

¹ *L'Islam : impressions et études*, Henry de Castries, A. Colin, Paris, 1907, p. 38.

² Koran 2, 23.

man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him that hath his shoe loosed. When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets: 'Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.'"¹

Is there a more iniquitous and senseless law? If a man refuses to marry his brother's widow, she spits on his face after taking off his shoes! If a woman holds the private parts of a man who is in conflict with her husband, her hand shall be cut off without mercy! How then can Jews and Christians consider the Bible a book of revelation?!

By way of comparison, here is a passage from the Koran which the German poet Goethe, who was greatly influenced by Islam, says is the very essence of the Koran²: "This is the Book! There is no doubt about it - a guide for those mindful of Allah, who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and donate from what We have provided for them, and who believe in what has been revealed to you O Prophet and what was revealed before you, and have sure faith in the Hereafter. It is they who are truly guided by their Lord, and it is they who will be successful. As for those who persist in disbelief, it is the same whether you warn them or not - they will never believe. Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and their sight is covered. They will suffer a tremendous

¹ Deuteronomy 25, 5-12.

² *Divan Occidental-oriental*, Goethe, traduction : Henri Lichtenberger, 1930, p. 340.

punishment."¹

The Koranic miracle

The greatest miracle claimed by the Prophet of Islam is the Koran, of which he said: "There was no prophet among the prophets but was given miracles because of which people had security or had belief, but what I was given was the Divine Inspiration which Allah revealed to me."² The Koran is indeed, according to Laura Veccia Vaglieri, "the greatest miracle that Muhammad was able to offer to the undecided people of this world."³ The Swiss journalist Roger du Pasquier confirms that "the main miracle of Islam has been and remains the revelation of the Koran."⁴

Here is what Ibn Kathir, the most famous Muslim exegete, says about the Koranic miracle: "Many exegetes explain that God sent each prophet with miracles adapted to the men of his time. In the time of Moses, magic and sorcery were widespread, and magicians were respected. So, God allowed him to perform miracles that dazzled the eyes and bewildered all magicians [...] As for Jesus, he was sent at a time when medicine and natural sciences were well developed. Thus, he performed miracles in front of them that no one could have done without the help of God, who established the laws of nature. Does a physician have the power to give life to an inert body, to heal the born blind or lepers, or to raise the dead in their graves where they were to remain until the Last Day? Likewise, the time in which Muhammad was sent was marked

¹ Koran 2, 2-7.

² Bukhari, 4981 ; Muslim, 152.

³ *Apologia dell' Islamismo*, Veccia Vaglieri, A. F. Formiggini, Rome, 1925.

⁴ *Découverte de l'islam*, Du Pasquier, Les trois continents, 1985, p. 63.

by the predominance of eloquent and high-ranking poets."¹

2- The Sunna

What is the Sunna?

The Sunnah comes second only to the Koran, and it is an Arabic term to designate all the words and deeds attributed to the Prophet, compiled in collections of hadiths. The hadith, therefore, refers to a word or deed of the Prophet reported by one of his companions. Thus, the books of hadiths, in terms of their content, are close to the four Gospels that transmit the sayings and actions of Jesus except that the plan of the gospels follows the course of the life of Christ while the hadiths are generally classified by topics.

Recension of the Traditions of the Prophet

There is, however, one major difference between the hadith collections and the gospels: the "chain of transmission". For, while the lives of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are unknown to us, let alone those who transmitted their texts, each hadith is reported to us with a list of the men who transmitted it, from the companion who heard it from the mouth of the Prophet to the one who recorded it in his collection. Indeed, one of the peculiarities of Islam is called "hadith sciences" which study the authenticity of a given hadith by analyzing the probity and accuracy of the various people who contributed to its transmission. If one person is missing from the chain, or if one of the reporters lacks probity or strictness, the hadith is simply rejected.

¹ *Tafsir ibn Kathir, exégèse abrégée*, Daroussalam, Riyadh, 2012, vol. 2, p. 173.

Words of utterly Prophetic Wisdom

Let us now mention a few sayings of the Prophet that will allow the reader to see the obvious difference between these words and those of God, recorded in the Koran, of which we have already mentioned a number of verses:

- Islam consists in witnessing that there is no god worthy of worship other than God and that Muhammad is the Envoy of God, in performing prayer, giving alms, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and making the pilgrimage to Makkah for those who can afford it.

- Faith consists in believing in God, in His angels, in His Revealed Books, in His Messengers, in the Last Day and in preordainment (destiny), whether its consequences are bad or good.

- worship God as if one sees Him, but if he does not achieve this state of devotion, then (he has to take it for granted that) God sees him.

- God's Right upon His slaves is that they should worship Him Alone and associate nothing with Him; and His slaves' right upon Him is that He should not punish anyone who does not associate a thing with Him.

- You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you shall not be true believers until you love one another.

- He who desires to be rescued from the fire of Hell and to enter Paradise, should die in a state of complete belief in God and the Last Day, and should do unto others what he wishes to be done unto him.

- None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother

what he loves for himself.

- Fear God wherever you are, follow a bad deed with a good one, it will blot it out, and behave in the best way with your neighbor.

- The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole-body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever.

- Do not despise any good thing, not even the fact of welcoming your neighbor with a smiling face.

- God has revealed to me that you must be humble, so that no one oppresses another or boasts over him.

- God has divided mercy into one hundred parts; and He retained with Him ninety-nine parts, and sent down to earth one part. Through this one-part creatures deal with one another with compassion, so much so that an animal lifts its hoof over its young lest it should hurt it".

- If the believer were to know what is with God of punishment, no one would hope to enter Paradise, and if the non-believer were to know what is with God of mercy, no one would despair of entering Paradise.

- He who is not merciful to people God will not be merciful to him.

- Beware of injustice, for injustice will only be darkness on the Day of Resurrection.

- Whoever believes in God and in the last day should not harm his neighbor; whoever believes in God and the Last

Day, should entertain his guest generously; and whoever believes in God and the Last Day should talk what is good (sense) or keep quiet."

- Three follow the deceased to his grave: His family, his wealth, and his deeds. Two of them return: his family and his wealth, and one remains with him: his deeds.

- Verily, God does not look at your appearance or wealth, but rather He looks at your hearts and actions.

- This world in comparison with the Hereafter is like the amount of water one of you gets when he dips his finger in the sea. Let him see what his finger returns with.

- The world is a prison-house for a believer and Paradise for a non-believer.

- The most complete of the believers in faith, is the one with the best character among them. And the best of you are those who are best to their women.

- God is merciful and He loves mercy. He gives to the merciful one what He does not give to the harsh one.

- He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, respect our elders.

- A man came to ask Muhammad for permission to participate in the jihad. The Prophet asked him: "Is any of your parents alive?" He answered in the affirmative. The Prophet said: "Then let your efforts be directed towards them."

- Paradise is surrounded by hardships, and the Fire is surrounded by desires.

- The strong-man is not the one who wrestles well but the one who controls himself when he is in a fit of rage.
- Whoever, Jew or Christian, embraces Islam will be doubly rewarded.

Chapter 2

The absence of contradictions

Setting a criterion for judging the authenticity of the words attributed to him by men, God says: "Do they not then reflect on the Koran? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies."¹In this chapter, we will prove that the Koran, unlike the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, does not contain any contradiction. Better still, it contradicts neither the original message of the Bible, nor history, nor science, nor even reason.

1- The Koran does not contradict itself

Proving that the Qur'an does not contain contradictions is not a difficult task because, if it did, orientalist - some of whom have studied Islam and the Holy Book of the Muslims only to better criticize it and point out any inconsistencies therein - would not have failed to make a detailed list of them. All the more so that God challenges men to find the slightest contradiction in it. The absence of contradictions in the

¹ Koran 4, 82.

Qur'an is particularly miraculous given that its revelation took place over a period of twenty-three years.

On our part, we will mention some of the contradictions in the Bible that remained unresolved.

1. The genealogy of Jesus given by Matthew (1, 1-17), contrasts with that of Luke (3, 23-38). It does not require much effort to find the first disagreement between the two genealogies: in Matthew, the father of Joseph the carpenter, Mary's husband, is called Jacob, while Luke calls him Heli. Another contradiction: while in Matthew, 27 generations separate Jesus from David, in Luke the number reaches 41. But the greatest inconsistency in Jesus' genealogy is the mention of Joseph the carpenter who, according to both Christians and Muslims, is not the father of Jesus who was born miraculously. The authors of the Gospels sought to achieve a completely specific goal by mentioning Joseph in the genealogy of Jesus even though he was not his biological father: proving that Jesus is the King Messiah of the descendants of David awaited by the Jews¹, Messiah of whom the angel said, addressing Mary: "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David."² This is the reason why Matthew voluntarily removed Jehoiakim from the genealogy of Jesus, saying: "Josias begat to Jechonias"³, Jechonias being the grandson, not the son of Josias, as we can read in 1 Chronicle 3, 15-16. The reason for this shortcut, these words of Jeremiah: "Therefore, thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David."⁴

¹ Jeremiah 33, 14-17.

² Luke 1, 32.

³ Matthew 1, 11.

⁴ Jeremiah 36, 30.

2. Speaking of Peter, Matthew contradicts himself on the same page. This first passage: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."¹ is clearly opposed to this other passage, which follows only a few lines later: "Jesus turned and said to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."²
3. This passage from 2 Kings 24:8, which states that "Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign" is clearly opposed to 2 Chronicles 36:9, which claims that "Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign". It appears clearly that the translators of the Jerusalem Bible were not convinced of what they considered to be an inspired text and therefore replaced in the second passage "eight years old" by "eighteen years old".
4. As for this passage: "Therefore, Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death"³, it clearly contradicts this passage in the same book of the Old Testament: "But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel."⁴ In order to hide

¹ Matthew 16, 17-19.

² Matthew 16, 23.

³ 2 Samuel 6, 23

⁴ 2 Samuel 21, 8

this obvious contradiction, both the Louis Segond Bible and the Jerusalem Bible simply replace, in the second passage, the name of Michal by that of Merab, her elder sister! We had to go back to the translation of André Chouraqui, who relied on the Hebrew text to show the trickery.

5. Another contradiction in the Old Testament is the passage in 1 Samuel 17:50 according to which it was David who brought down and killed Goliath: "So, David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David," in clear contrast to the other account that Goliath was killed by Elchanan: "And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath."¹
6. Contradiction this time between the New and the Old Testament in these words that John 3:13 attributes to Jesus: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven"², in obvious contradiction with Genesis 5:24, where we learn that "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" and with 2 Kings 2:1, where it is said that "when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind".

There are more contradictions in the Bible than can be enumerated here. It should be noted that these texts are irreconcilable, contrary to the texts of the Koran, which some seek in vain to oppose one to the other. Charles Guignebert, holder of the chair of Christianity at the Sorbonne from 1919

¹ 2 Samuel 21, 19

² John 3, 13

to 1937, writes on this topic: "The contradictions between the three synoptics are very frequent and extremely serious. It's a joke to maintain that they only deal with details and that the evangelists agree on the essentials. What is essential is that they borrow from a common source, and their three testimonies are but one; the freedom with which each of them uses the common ground is terribly disturbing in terms of the stability and solidity of traditions. A careful study of the synoptic texts unveils a mythical work that each evangelist performs in his own way."¹

2- Islam contradicts neither Judaism nor Christianity

Firstly: dogma

- *Unicity or Trinity?*

The Islamic belief about God Almighty is completely consistent with that of the Jews: God is one and no one but Him deserves to be worshiped. What could be closer than the statement of the Muslim faith - "There is no deity worthy of worship but God"- and the Shema Israel: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD."²When asked by a scribe about the first of all the commandments, Jesus himself answered: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord."³Yet Christianity, which claims itself of Jesus, is based on the dogma of the Trinity.

The Prophet Muhammad thus came to restore Abrahamic monotheism in all its purity, a monotheism challenged by the doctrine of the Trinity. Here is what Jules La Beaume wrote

¹ *Jésus*, Charles Guignebert, Renaissance du Livre, Paris, 1933, p. 502.

² Deuteronomy 6, 4.

³ Mark 12, 29.

on this subject: "Muhammad never intended to invent a new God, nor to institute a new cult. Semitic first he only claimed to reestablish the ancient Semitic monotheism and to restore the cult of Abraham, that is to say the Mosaic cult, minus its priestly body and the pumps of the temple of Jerusalem."¹

The Italian orientalist Laura Veccia Vaglieri writes in her book *Defense of Islam*: "Thanks to Islam, paganism in all its forms was repelled. Conceptions of the universe, religious practices and customs were completely rid of the superstitions that distorted them, and the human spirit was freed from prejudice. Eventually, man regained his dignity. He became humble and subservient to the Creator and Master of all mankind."²

The Prophet also came to abolish all intermediaries between man and God, intermediaries omnipresent in Christianity through Christ, whom Christians pray and worship far more than their true Lord, through the saints whom they worship, and through the clergy of the Church, who have, for example, appropriated the right to forgive sins. Islam, on the other hand, has no clergy.

Laura Veccia Vaglieri writes on this subject: "The spirit was freed from prejudices and passions; the will of man was freed from the chains that held it captive to others and to so-called hidden powers. Priests, false keepers of the mysteries, brokers of salvation, and all those who pretended to be mediators between God and man and who, as a result, believed that they could control the will of others, all fell from their pedestals.

¹ *Le Koran analysé d'après la traduction de M. Kasimirski et les observations de plusieurs autres savants orientalistes*, Jules La Beaume, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1878, p. 8.

² *Apologia dell' Islamismo*, Veccia Vaglieri, A. F. Formigini, Rome, 1925.

Man became God's slave only. To others he had only the obligations of a free man to another free man. Whereas before men suffered from the injustice of social classes, Islam proclaimed equality among human beings. A Muslim is not distinguished from other Muslims by his lineage or any other factor independent of his personality, but by his piety, his works, his moral qualities, and his intellectual faculties."¹

If Jesus, like all biblical prophets, came to teach the dogma of the oneness of God, then where did the doctrine of the Trinity come from - the Christian doctrine of the one God in three persons – that clearly opposes it? Does the term Trinity appear only in the Bible? The answer is given to us by André-Marie Gérard in his *Dictionary of the Bible*: "It may seem strange to include in a biblical dictionary this word which is not found in any text of the Holy Scriptures. Albert Blaise's *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Latin-French Dictionary of Christian Authors) mentions its first appearance in the writings of Saint Theophilus of Antioch (around 180), in the Greek form, of course, of Triassic."² He adds further on: "Moreover, what will always remain confirmed, and even recalled by Jesus himself, is the Oneness of God, in opposition to polytheism which was the constant temptation for the chosen people. If God was not One, there would be no mystery of the Trinity," he concludes very seriously.

Tom Harpur writes about this in his book *For Christ's Sake*: "There is no mention of the Trinity dogma in the Bible. And while St. Paul had a comprehensive vision of the role and person of Jesus, at no point does he affirm that Jesus is God. Jesus himself never claimed that he was the second person of

¹ *Ibidem*.

² *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 1349-1350.

the Trinity, nor did he pretend that he had exactly the same rank as God. As a pious Jew, he would even have condemned this kind of thinking."¹

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* confirms: "Neither the term Trinity nor this notion is found in the New Testament. In addition, Christ and his disciples never contradicted the profession of faith used in the Old Testament: Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord. [6:4]. In reality, the dogma of the Trinity was worked out over several centuries, giving rise to many controversies. It is only during the Council of Nicaea (325) that it is asserted that the Son is consubstantial with the Father. As for the Holy Spirit, a simple allusion is made to him. It was not until the end of the fourth century that the dogma of the Trinity was laid down."²

- Son of God or prophet?

One of the main points of contention between Christians and Muslims is the status of Jesus, Son of God, Word incarnate, second person of the Trinity, for the former, Jewish prophet, for the latter. However, the Christian dogma of the divine nature of Christ is not based on any word of Jesus who, on the contrary, introduced himself as a prophet, a simple man, although he had a very close relationship with his Lord. Here are some of his words that clearly contradict the dogma of Jesus' divine sonship:

1. "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God."³

¹ *For Christ's Sake*, Tom Harpur, Beacon Press, Boston, 1987, p. 11.

² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15^{ème} édition, vol. 11, p. 928.

³ Mark 10, 18.

2. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."¹
3. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."²
4. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."³
5. "No prophet is accepted in his country."⁴

And if the expression "Son of God" is used thirteen times in the New Testament to refer to Jesus, he never uttered it but his disciples did. Moreover, the title of Son of God is attributed to other biblical figures: Adam (Luke 3:38), David (Psalms 2:7) or Solomon (1 Chronicles 22:10), but also to the angels, beings who are close to God (Job 1:6). The people of Israel themselves are referred to as the "firstborn" of God (Exodus 4:22). All this proves that the expression "son of God" actually means "chosen of God" or "beloved of God". In the New Testament we read: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"⁵ Jesus himself applies this formula to his disciples: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called

¹ John 20, 17.

² John 17, 3.

³ John 13, 16.

⁴ Luke 4, 24.

⁵ 1 John 3, 1.

children of God."¹

Hebrew, like all Semitic languages, gives the term “son” various meanings derived from the first meaning. Here is what André-Marie Gérard writes on this subject: "In the eyes of the inspired authors, all beings are undoubtedly in some way “son” of their Creator, but those close to God by their function or rank, by their faith or their fidelity, seem to deserve better than others to be called “sons of God”"²

On this subject, Charles Guignebert, who considers Jesus to be a descendant of the prophets of Israel, writes the following: "Jesus never claimed to be a god. The phrase “Son of God”, in the strict and orthodox sense of the word, means something monstrous and even inconceivable for a Jew. Yet, it is undeniable that the thought of Jesus is Jewish. Moreover, not once has the accusation of claiming to be God been levelled against him by the Jews, neither during his trial nor in apostolic times. This, it seems, is a conclusive argument."³

Closer to us in time, Bart Ehrman sums up the prevailing opinion among biblical scholars today about the nature of Jesus: "For more than a century now, since the publication of Albert Schweitzer's landmark masterpiece, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, the majority of scholars in Europe and North America have regarded Jesus as a Jewish apocalyptic prophet."⁴

¹ Matthew 5, 9.

² *Le Dictionnaire de la Bible*, André-Marie Gérard, p. 402.

³ *Manuel d'histoire ancienne du christianisme : les origines*, Charles Guignebert, Alphonse Picard et Fils, Paris, 1906, p. 222.

⁴ *Jesus, Interrupted, Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible*, Bart Ehrman, Harper Collins, 2009, p. 156.

The British theologian John Hick (1922-2012) speaks even of a consensus on this topic: A further point of broad agreement among New Testament scholars is even more important for understanding the development of christology. This is that the historical Jesus did not make the claim to deity that later Christian thought was to make for him: he did not understand himself to be God, or God the Son, incarnate.¹

The dogmas of Christianity, which are fundamentally incompatible with Islam, cannot, according to Charles Guignebert, be attributed to Jesus: "Therefore the Synoptic Gospels do not really contain the expression of the three basic dogmas of orthodoxy: incarnation, divinity of Christ, redemption. Historically, it is impossible to say that they were in Jesus's mind. On the contrary, it can be asserted that they did not cross his mind."² Explaining the reasons that led Christians to modify the original message of Jesus, a message in perfect agreement with Muslim doctrine, Charles Guignebert adds: "Jesus did not intend, it cannot be repeated too often, to found a religion, but only to bring to Judaism, which the Pharisee formalism withered, a new and vivifying spirit [...] Why then has such a simple and clear doctrine resulted in the complication of dogmas and the obscurity of mysteries, which today are the very substance of orthodoxy? Jesus, it cannot be over-emphasized, did not intend to found a religion but rather to breath into Judaism a new and lively spirit after it was dried up by Pharisee formalism [...] So why did a simple and clear doctrine lead to the complication of dogmas and the obscurity of the mysteries that are today the

¹ *The Metaphor of God Incarnate: Christology in a pluralistic age*, John Hick, Westminster John Knox Press, 1993, p. 27.

² *Manuel d'histoire ancienne du christianisme : les origines*, Charles Guignebert, Alphonse Picard et Fils, Paris, 1906, p. 224.

very substance of orthodoxy? And why was the Church formed, and became absolute in its authority, uncompromising with the discussion and the individualism that Jesus seemed to have wanted to develop above all? This is because the expected kingdom did not come, and in order to avoid surrendering to despair when it occurred to the mind that the Lord had made a mistake, it was necessary to interpret his words, deepen them and develop them even beyond the intelligible."¹ As we have shown in the first part of this book, Muslims, for their part, consider that the Kingdom of God came with Islam.

Secondly: the cult

In this chapter we will show that Islamic worship practices do not differ much from those of the biblical prophets and early Christians.

- *Purification*

Ablutions are practiced today by Muslims, especially before each prayer. But this practice is also found in Judaism, as explained in the Dictionary of the Bible Vigouroux: "The priests and Levites, who were in charge of the purification of the people, were to begin to purify themselves, whenever necessary, before performing any of their duties. The Israelites also purified themselves when they had to draw near to the Lord to perform some religious duty."²

- *Prostration*

Muslims today are the only monotheists who prostrate

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 239-240.

² *Dictionnaire de la Bible Vigouroux*, vol. 5, part 1, p. 879.

before their Lord. But the Bible reports that Jesus, as is the case with the prophets of the Bible, used to prostrate:

1. Abraham: "Abram fell on his face."¹
2. Moses and Aaron: "And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them."²
3. Jesus: "And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying: O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *will*."³ This story is not in line with the Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus.
4. The people of Israel: "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground."⁴

There is nothing similar to this prayer except that of Muslims who today are the only ones who raise their hands to Heaven calling on their Lord and who kneel and prostrate themselves in prayer.

¹ Genesis 17, 3.

² Numbers 20, 6.

³ Matthew 26, 39.

⁴ Nehemiah 8, 6.

- Almsgiving

Zakat in Islam is the legal alms that are taken from personal wealth, crops and livestock. The reader will be surprised to learn that Judaism and Christianity also impose legal levy on herds and crops. This "tax of God" represents one-tenth of property, hence its name in French « *dîme* » (tithe) from the Latin *decima*. But two important differences distinguish the Zakat from the tithe: the first is that the Muslim pays this tax to the poor and needy in particular, while the Jew had to give it to the Levites and the Christians to the Church: "The Old Testament obliged the Jews to surrender a certain part of their income (the tithe) to the Levites. It continued without difficulty in the East under the new law, but was at first considered in the West only as a praiseworthy practice. Since the end of the sixth century, councils have tried to apply it by imposing disciplinary penalties on those who refused to obey."¹

The second difference is that tithing has completely disappeared, despite the Church's efforts to impose it, while many Muslims continue to pay Zakat, the third pillar of Islam. Let us note that tithing is one of the few, if not the only, provisions of the Law that the Church has tried to perpetuate and impose on the faithful, claiming, following Paul, that the law should be abolished.

- Fasting

Fasting the month of Ramadan is the fourth pillar of Islam. Observed by the vast majority of Muslims, whether practicing or believers only, fasting is also found in the Old Testament,

¹ *Précis d'histoire du droit français*, Olivier-Martin, Dalloz, Paris, 1953, p. 69.

as in 2 Samuel 12: 1: "And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even." Also in the New Testament: "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away."¹

Fasting was so widespread in Jesus' time that the Pharisees and scribes reproached Jesus' disciples for not fasting regularly: "And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."²

- The Pilgrimage

The Israelites had to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem on the three main feasts: Easter, Pentecost and Tabernacles³. Jesus and his disciples went to Jerusalem themselves on this occasion⁴. Today, after the demolition of the Second Temple in 70 AD, Muslims are the only monotheists who go on pilgrimage to House of God, the fifth pillar of Islam. They travel to the Temple in Makkah, which, as we showed in the first part of this book, is the New Jerusalem proclaimed by the prophets.

- The Veil

The Muslim veil, which is being severely criticized today,

¹ Acts 13, 3.

² Luke 5, 33-35

³ Exodus 23, 17.

⁴ Luke 2, 41-43.

was worn by Jewish and Christian women.

In the Old Testament, Rebecca covers herself as her future husband, Isaac, approaches: "For she had said unto the servant, what man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, it is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself."¹

And the New Testament states: "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered."² In addition to that, Saint Mary appears veiled in all her images, just as Jesus wears a beard in all the representations we know of him. These realities should raise questions in the minds of those who worship Jesus the Son of God and Mary as the Mother of God.

After all this, are we not entitled to ask about the reasons for this intense hatred that the headscarf evokes today, mainly in France, on the part of feminists in particular who regard the veil as a sign of women's submission to men? Perhaps the answer to that is what Paul said: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels."³

Therefore, according to Paul, it is the duty of the woman to cover her head in submission to the man. This is obviously

¹ Genesis 24, 65.

² 1 Corinthians 11, 6.

³ 1 Corinthians 11, 7-10.

not the case in Islam, which imposes the veil on women, not out of submission to the man, but to the Lord who commands in the Koran: "O Prophet! Ask your wives, daughters, and believing women to draw their cloaks over their bodies. In this way it is more likely that they will be recognized as virtuous and not be harassed."¹ Muslim women do not wear the veil except in compliance with and submission to the command of God, which excludes any willingness to proselytize. The Koranic verse explains this obligation by the need to protect women against offenses to which they may be exposed outside their homes, and the need to be distinguished from other women. According to Odon Vallet, historian of religions, the first Christian women wore the veil for the same reason: "The virgins of the primitive Church were veiled, like the Roman vestals. There is no doubt that this is the origin of the nuns' veil, as a distinctive sign from other women."²

Thirdly: morality

The Ten Commandments³ are the foundation of the Judeo-Christian religions although in Christianity, especially Catholicism, their importance is relativized by the dogma invented by the Church. The Decalogue is divided into two parts, the first one has to do with the relationship with God while the second relates to the relationship with men. The first of the commandments: "Thou shalt have none other gods before me" is, as we have seen, at the core of the Islamic dogma: "There is no god but God", and of the message of Jesus: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD." The commandments concerning the relationship with

¹ Koran 33, 59.

² Le journal La Croix, 11/12/2003.

³ Exodus 20, 2-17.

mankind are as follows:

- Honor thy father and thy mother.
- 'Thou shalt not kill.
- 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- 'Thou shalt not steal.
- 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- You shall not covet thy neighbor's house.

These commandments are found in this Koranic passage: "Say, 'O Prophet, ' "Bring your witnesses who can testify that Allah has forbidden this." If they 'falsely' testify, do not testify with them. And do not follow the desires of those who deny Our proofs, disbelieve in the Hereafter, and set up equals with their Lord. Say, 'O Prophet, ' "Come! Let me recite to you what your Lord has forbidden to you: do not associate others with Him 'in worship'. 'Do not fail to' honour your parents. Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for you and for them. Do not come near indecencies, openly or secretly. Do not take a 'human' life - made sacred by Allah - except with legal right. This is what He has commanded you, so perhaps you will understand."¹

The last commandment that warns against covetousness is also found in the Holy Koran in the following verse: "And do not crave what Allah has given some of you over others."²

Regarding the nature of the Creator and His prophets, and

¹ Koran 6, 151-152.

² Koran 4, 32.

the way to worship Him or behave with His creatures, the messengers of God carried the same message.

3- The Koran does not contradict science

No verse in the Koran describing a natural phenomenon has been up to now contradicted by modern scientific discoveries, as opposed to some passages in the Bible, which are in contradiction with science. Here is what Dr. Maurice Bucaille writes on this subject in *La Bible, le Coran, et la science* : "It was in a totally objective spirit, and without any preconceived ideas that I first examined the Koranic Revelation. I was looking for the degree of compatibility between the Koranic text and the data of modern science. I knew from translations that the Koran often made allusion to all sorts of natural phenomena, but I had only a summary knowledge of it. It was only when I examined the text very closely in Arabic that I kept a list of them at the end of which I had to acknowledge the evidence in front of me: the Koran did not contain a single statement that was assailable from a modern scientific point of view. I repeated the same test for the Old Testament and the Gospels, always preserving the same objective outlook. In the former I did not even have to go beyond the first book, Genesis, to find statements totally out of keeping With the cast-iron facts of modern science. On opening the Gospels, one is immediately confronted with a serious problem. On the first page we find the genealogy of Jesus, but Matthew's text is in evident contradiction to Luke's on the same question. There is a further problem in that the latter's data on the antiquity of man on Earth are incompatible with modern knowledge."¹

¹ *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des*

Muslim commentators mention dozens of Koranic statements that are consistent with the data of science. We will limit ourselves here to a few examples, the last of which is from the Sunnah.

Firstly: the expansion of the universe

We built the universe with great might, and We are certainly expanding it. (Koran 51, 47)

Some commentators believe that these words of the Most High imply the expansion of the universe, which is now a well-known phenomenon. It was in 1929 that Hubble showed that galaxies are moving away from each other in a speed proportional to their distance. Hubble's discovery was one of the turning points in the history of astronomy. The law of proportionality between distance and velocity showed that the recession of galaxies was not a movement in relation to a static space, but an expansion of the universe itself, that is, an expansion of space over time. In 2011, Saul Perlmutter, Brian Schmidt and Adam Riess even won the Nobel Prize in Physics for their discoveries about the accelerated expansion of the universe, because not only is the universe expanding, but the expansion is accelerating.

It is true that the Bible contains a passage close to that of the Koran: "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens."¹ But in the same book of Job, we find an untruth that is not echoed by the Koran: "Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?"² The Koranic miracle, one can never stress this enough, is based on the

connaissances modernes, Maurice Bucaille, Seghers, Paris, 1976, p. 11.

¹ Job 9, 8.

² Job 37, 18.

statement of realities that never contradict modern scientific data. Maurice Bucaille expresses his astonishment: "How could a man [...] pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at the time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncements on the subject? The ideas in this study are developed from a purely scientific point of view. They lead to the conclusion that it is inconceivable for a human being living in the Seventh century A.D. to have made statements in the Koran on a great variety of subjects that do not belong to his period and for them to be in keeping with what was to be known only centuries later. For me, there can be no human explanation to the Koran."¹

Secondly: roundness and rotation of the earth.

He created the heavens and the earth for a purpose. He wraps the night around the day, and wraps the day around the night. And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each orbiting for an appointed term. (Koran 39, 5)

The Arabic verb "kauara" used here to describe the way in which the darkness of night covers the light of the day, basically means: "turn around oneself" as a balloon does (kura) or "to wrap" as a turban is wrapped around the head. The image reveals how the different regions of the earth, as it rotates around itself, are successively illuminated by the sun in an incessant round. Maurice Bucaille describes this phenomenon as follows: "The Sun permanently lights up (except in the case of an eclipse) the half of the Earth's surface that is facing it, while the other half of the globe is in darkness. The Earth turns on its own axis and the lighting remains the

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 126-127.

same, so that an area in the form of a half-sphere makes one revolution around the Earth in twenty-four hours while the other half-sphere, that has remained in darkness, makes the same revolution in the same time. This perpetual rotation of night and day is quite clearly described in the Koran. It is easy for the human understanding to grasp this notion nowadays because we have the idea of the Sun's (relative) immobility and the Earth's rotation. This process of perpetual coiling, including the interpenetration of one sector by another is expressed in the Koran just as if the concept of the Earth's roundness had already been conceived at the time which was obviously not the case."¹

Note that at the time of the revelation of the Koran, many civilizations still believed that the Earth was flat, and no one could imagine that it revolves around itself. And this belief prevailed until the sixteenth century when Magellan made his trip, which was the first world tour, which lasted from 1519 to 1522. The sphericity of the Earth, which was known at that time by only a few scholars, became a commonly accepted reality. Both the Old Testament² and the New Testament³ assume that the Earth is flat.

These scientific errors in the Bible have led many Christians to become atheists like David Presutta, author of *The Biblical Cosmos Versus Modern Cosmology: Why the Bible Is Not the Word of God*. On the contrary, it is the scientific realities of the Koran, which do not in any way contradict the modern data of science, that have prompted many Christians and atheists to convert to Islam, especially after reading the book of Maurice

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 165.

² *Jeremiah* 16, 19

³ *Apocalypse* 7, 1.

Bucaille.

The second part of the verse we are studying here (Koran 39, 5) states that the sun and the moon move according to certain laws. Other verses specify that each of these stars follows an orbit of its own: "the sun and the moon - each travelling in an orbit."¹ Today we know that the sun orbits the center of the Milky Way and that it rotates around itself with a period of about 27 Earth days. Maurice Bucaille comments on these verses as follows: "It is shown that the Sun moves in an orbit, but no indication is given as to what this orbit might be in relation to the Earth. At the time of the Koranic Revelation, it was thought that the Sun moved while the Earth stood still. This was the system of geocentrism that had held sway since the time of ptolemy, Second century B.C., and was to continue to do so until Copernicus in the Sixteenth century A.D. Although people supported this concept at the time of Muhammad, it does not appear anywhere in the Koran, either here or elsewhere."²

Thirdly: water at the origin of life.

And We created from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? (Koran 21, 30)

Here is what Dr. Maurice Bucaille wrote regarding this verse: "The phrase can equally mean that every living thing was made of water (as its essential component) or that every living thing originated in water. The two possible meanings are strictly in accordance with scientific data."³

¹ Koran 21,33

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 188.

Richard Dawkins, a British biologist, a self-proclaimed atheist, famous for his book *The God Delusion*, recognizes that water is the source of life: "Our kind of life cannot sustain itself without liquid water. Exobiologists, therefore, in search of evidence of extraterrestrial life, look to the sky in the hope of finding signs of water."¹

Fourthly: embryonic development.

O humanity! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then know that We did create you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then developed you into a clinging clot of blood, then a lump of flesh - fully formed or unformed (Koran 22, 5)

In the introduction to the chapter he devotes to the description of human reproduction in the Koran, Maurice Bucaille states: "Human Reproduction from the moment ancient human writings enter into detail (however slight) on the subject of reproduction, they inevitably make statements that are inaccurate. In the Middle Ages-and even in more recent time-reproduction was surrounded by all sorts of myths and superstitions. How could it have been otherwise, considering the fact that to understand its complex mechanisms, man first had to possess a knowledge of anatomy, the discovery of the microscope had to be made, and the so-called basic sciences had to be founded which were to nurture physiology, embryology, obstetrics, etc. The situation is quite different in the Koran. The Book mentions precise mechanisms in many places and describes clearly-defined stages in reproduction, without providing a single statement marred by inaccuracy. Everything in the Koran is

¹ *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins, Bantam press, London, 2006, p. 135.

explained in simple terms which are easily understandable to man and in strict accordance with what was to be discovered much later on."¹

As it is not a book of science, the Koran, when it describes some natural phenomena, its sole aim is, as in the verses mentioned in this chapter, to demonstrate the full power of God in general terms accessible to contemporaries of the prophet in the period of revelation. We mention these verses only to prove that none of them contradicts modern data, which in itself is sufficient proof of their divine origin. The Koran does not repeat the "scientific" errors of the Bible or the myths of the time. Our purpose in mentioning these verses is only to prove that none of them contradict modern data, which in itself constitutes sufficient proof of their divine origin. The Koran does not take up the "scientific" errors of the Bible or the myths of its time. This is particularly the case with the myths relating to human reproduction. Thus, commenting on this passage from the Old Testament: "I was molded into flesh, within the period of ten months, compacted with blood"², the translators of the Jerusalem Bible assert: "Ancient medical science perceived the formation of the embryo as the coagulation of maternal blood under the influence of the seminal element."³

Ancient medicine believed that the embryo was formed from the blood of the menstrual period through the action of a man's sperm. There is nothing like this in the Koran, which states only that Adam was created from the earth and that

¹ *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des connaissances modernes*, Maurice Bucaille, Seghers, Paris, 1976, p. 199.

² Wisdom 7, 1-2.

³ *La Bible de Jérusalem*, Editions du Cerf, 1973, p. 664.

men were created from a "sperm-drop," the seminal fluid.

Moreover, while the Koran distinguishes between different stages of embryonic development, the prevailing view at the time of revelation is that of miniature men growing in their mothers' wombs. Considered to be the greatest Christian theologian of his time, Tertullien claimed, in the early centuries of the Christian era, that the whole being was found in the man's sperm. "One of the oldest images of fetuses in the Christian West is found in a ninth-century manuscript of the gynecological treatise of Moschion (kept in the Royal Library of Belgium): one page of this manuscript depicts the various fetal positions in the uterus. The matrix has two horns to respect the doctrine. Fetuses are miniaturized made men."¹ As late as the 18th century, Buffon claimed that the embryo contains all the parts that should make up a man, which develop successively and differently from one another. Embryology was only born in the 1820s and it was not until 1880 that the first atlas describing the stages of development of the human embryo appeared.²

Fifthly: the formation of cow's milk.

And there is certainly a lesson for you in cattle: We give you to drink of what is in their bellies, from between digested food and blood: pure milk, pleasant to drink (Koran 16, 66)

Here is Maurice Bucaille's commentary on this verse: "From

¹ *Iconographie des embryons et des fœtus dans les traités d'accouchement et d'anatomie du XVI^e au XVIII^e siècle*, Marie-France Morel, Histoire des sciences médicales, tome XLIII, n°1, 2009.

² Voir *La représentation de l'embryon et du fœtus de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, Encyclopédie de la naissance, Jean-Louis Fischer, Albin Michel, 2009.

a scientific point of view, physiological notions must be called upon to grasp the meaning of this verse. The substances that ensure the general nutrition of the body come from chemical transformations which occur along the length of the digestive tract. These substances come from the contents of the intestine. On arrival in the intestine at the appropriate stage of chemical transformation, they pass through its wall and towards the systemic circulation. This passage is effected in two ways: either directly, by what are called the 'lymphatic vessels', or indirectly, by the portal circulation. This conducts them first to the liver, where they undergo alterations, and from here they then emerge to join the systemic circulation. In this way everything passes through the bloodstream. The constituents of milk are secreted by the mammary glands. These are nourished, as it were, by the product of food digestion brought to them via the bloodstream. Blood therefore plays the role of collector and conductor of what has been extracted from food, and it brings nutrition to the mammary glands, the producers of milk, as it does to any other organ. Here the initial process which sets everything else in motion is the bringing together of the contents of the intestine and blood at the level of the intestinal wall itself. This very precise concept is the result of the discoveries made in the chemistry and physiology of the digestive system. It was totally unknown at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and has been understood only in recent times. The discovery of the circulation of the blood, was made by Harvey roughly ten centuries after the Koranic Revelation."¹

¹ *La Bible, le Coran et la science. Les Ecritures saintes examinées à la lumière des connaissances modernes*, Maurice Bucaille, Seghers, Paris, 1976, p. 198.

Sixthly: the orientation of bees.

And your Lord inspired the bees: "Make your homes in the mountains, the trees, and in what people construct, and feed from the flower of any fruit you please and follow the ways your Lord has made easy for you." (Koran 16:68-69)

The ways made easy for the bees are those that enable them to go to search for their food and then return to the hive without losing their way. The sense of orientation of bees is known to be extraordinarily sophisticated. Many works were devoted to this subject, including one by von Frisch (1958), who wrote: "One is tempted to believe in a magnetic force that could guide a bee confidently from miles away to the hive from which it came."

Georges Thinhès, professor at the University of Louvain, describes von Frisch's experiments as follows: "When the foragers return to the hive at the end of their explorations of the Provençal region, they perform characteristic movements that have been given the name 'dances' because of their specific motor stereotypy. There are two types of dance: the round dance (Rundtanz) and the figure eight dance or the wriggling dance (Schwanzeltanz). As for the round dance, it is performed by the foragers that indicate to the receivers a feed located at a maximum distance of 100 meters from the hive. The bee provides a simple indication of the presence of the feed, but no indication of the direction. This must be related to the size of the hive population. If it is large (several thousand individuals), the dispersion of insects within a radius of this size provides sufficient probability of success even in the absence of a vector component. The eight-way dance is performed by the foragers returning from a place of origin more than 100 meters away from the hive. The bee conveys a

complex multidimensional message."¹

Recent studies conducted by researchers at the University of Illinois have shown that this unique sense of orientation in bees is due to a gene called *Egr*. "This discovery finally explains how bees can move and orient themselves in a wonderful way with a very small brain," says Gene Robinson, one of the authors of the study published in 2013 in the *Journal of Experimental Biology*.²

Seventhly: the joints of the human body.

Every one of the children of Adam has been created with three hundred and sixty joints (Muslim's collection, hadith 1007).

These words, spoken by the Prophet fourteen centuries ago, indicate that the human skeleton consists of three hundred and sixty joints.

Here is what Vincent Nougier, a professor at Grenoble University wrote on this topic: "To make a movement, the body system can intervene on a very large number of degrees of freedom offered by neurons (about 100 billion neurons) - muscles (about 600 Muscle) and joints (360 joints, some of which can barely move)."³

Thibault Rochemont and Valentin Gensbittel detailed this issue on their TPE Articulations website as follows: "The human body all contains 360 joints distributed as follows: 86

¹ *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, « Orientation animale », Georges Thinès.

² *Activity-dependent gene expression in honey bee mushroom bodies in response to orientation flight*, The Journal of experimental Biology, Claudia Lutz, Gene Robinson, 2013.

³ *STAPS : anatomie, physiologie, neurosciences et biomécanique*, Delamarche, Multon, Horrut, Nougier, Elsevier Masson, 2018, p. 200.

in the skull, 6 in the throat, and 66 in the rib cage, 76 in the spine and pelvis, 64 in the upper extremities, and 62 in the lower limbs, as many joints that provide the human body with an almost infinite number of possible combinations of movements, but above all with exceptional accuracy. If the human being is the most powerful living being known so far it is largely due to the great number of joints in his body."

The Koran sometimes corrects "scientific errors" in the Bible, such as this Old Testament passage that indicates that the sky is supported by pillars: "The pillars of heaven tremble"¹ to which this Koranic verse seems to respond: "He created the heavens without pillars—as you can see."²

4- The Koran does not contradict reason

Anyone who opens the Koran and reads it from beginning to end will not find anything that will shock his mind, unlike the Bible which contains countless improbabilities and passages that shock both reason and morality.

1. Jacob emerges victorious in his battle with God.

"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."³

2. David violates the tenth commandment: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

"And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of

¹ Job 26, 11.

² Koran 31, 10.

³ Genesis 32, 28.

the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon[...]. And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her." ¹

The punishment that was inflicted upon David by God as a result of his crime is itself unbelievable: "I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives."²

3. The eldest son of Jacob is sleeping with his father's concubine.³
4. Judah, son of Jacob, is sleeping with his daughter-in-law, Tamar.⁴The fact is that this Tamar and the son who is the fruit of this incestuous marriage, Phares, appear in the genealogy of Jesus.⁵
5. King David's son rapes his own sister.⁶
6. Samson kills a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass.⁷
7. The Hebrews kill one hundred thousand men in one day.⁸

¹ 2 Samuel 11, 2-4.

² 2 Samuel 12, 11; 2 Samuel 12, 11

³ Genesis 35, 22.

⁴ Genesis 38, 15-30.

⁵ Matthew 1, 3.

⁶ 2 Samuel 13, 1-14.

⁷ Judges 15, 16.

⁸ 1 Kings 20, 29-30.

Chapter 3

The influence of the message of Islam

1- The influence of Islam on thoughts

The Example of Unitarianism

Monotheists rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, which they saw as an abandonment of monotheism, and denounced the Trinitarian Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches as not being strictly monotheistic. The origins of monotheism lie in movements before the Council of Chalcedon, the most famous of which was Arianism in the fourth century. After the disappearance of Arianism, Unitarianism was revived in Central Europe in the mid-16th century. Then in 1774 the first English Unitarian Church was founded and, in 1784, the doctrine of James Freeman appeared in America. This doctrine has been adopted by at least five unitarian presidents of the United States, including Thomas Jefferson, one of the authors of the American Constitution. Ancient Unitarians believe in the absolute oneness of God and consider Jesus to be the Messiah and a prophet. The similarity between this doctrine and the Muslim dogma is such that one may wonder whether Unitarianism has not been influenced by Islam.

The Spanish physician and theologian Michel Servet is one of the most famous unitarians, perhaps because of his tragic end as he was burned alive in Geneva due to heresy after escaping from the Catholic Inquisition. Believing that he had found refuge among Protestants, known to be more tolerant,

he was finally delivered to the pyre in 1553 with the approval of Jean Calvin himself, whom he had opposed in his writings, especially in his *Christianismi restitutio* (*The Restitution of Christianity*), which claims to be a response to Calvin's *institution of the Christian religion*.

But what was exactly reproached to Servet? Specifically, these words: "God alone knows how much this tradition of the Trinity has been a source of derision for the Muhammadans. Even the Jews are reluctant to adhere to our fantasy and scoff at our Trinitarian folly. And because of the blasphemy it involves, they do not believe that "that" Jesus was the Messiah who was promised in the Law. This is not the belief of the Muslims and the Hebrews alone, but also the beasts of the fields themselves would laugh at us when they realize our fantastic theory, because all the deeds of the Lord bless the one God. Listen also to what Muhammad says, for more credit must be given to a truth confessed by an enemy than to a hundred lies of our own."¹

An open-minded humanist, Servet quickly concluded that the Trinity was an innovation of the 4th century council, a doctrine that neither Jesus nor his apostles had ever preached. His first book, which he published at the age of twenty, was entitled *Errors of the Trinity*. In his *Christianismi restitutio*, Servet places Muhammad above Catholics and Protestants, because he is closer to the teaching of Jesus who, like him, preached the oneness of God.²

In a conference given on October 27, 2007 at the *Instituto de*

¹ *De errores acerca de la Trinidad*, in *Obras Completas*, Vol. II-I. Primeros escritos teológicos, Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2004, p. 227.

² *Restitution du christianisme*, Michel Servet, Paris, 2011, vol. 1, p. 192.

estudios sijenenses Miguel Servet entitled "Islam in the work of Miguel Servet", the Spanish academic Jaume de Marcos Andreu underlined the influence of the Koran and Islam on Servet's writings and the reasons for his condemnation. He said: "So many Koranic quotations and so many glorifying comments on the teachings of Islam about the one God could not go unnoticed, and during the heresy trial he was subjected to in Geneva, his accusers were quick to confront him with them. They did so not only to seek grounds for condemning him, but there was a real fear that the ideas of Islam would spread throughout Europe. These were the ideas of the enemy, and tolerance, in their view, could only lead to a weakening of Christian societies: Islam's apology was the Trojan horse that preceded the Turkish conquest. As Bainton rightly notes in his biography of Michel Servet, the prosecutors also had to bear in mind that the countries where Arianism prevailed fell under the rule of Islam".

A century later, there is still a strong fear that unitarian ideas will cause further conversion to Islam in Europe. As the Swiss Protestant Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620-1667) wrote: "These teachings drawn from the abyss of the old antitrinitarians could pave the way for Islam within the borders of Europe."¹

In fact, some well-known unitarians have converted to Islam as is the case of Adam Neuser (1530-1576), the German Protestant pastor who was accused of denying the deity of Jesus Christ and was imprisoned with Johann Sylvan. The latter was tortured and beheaded while Neuser managed to escape. After converting to Islam, he obtained asylum in

¹ *Socinianism, Islam and the Radical Uses of Arabic Scholarship*, Mulsow, p. 560-561.

Istanbul, where he entered the service of the Ottoman Sultan.

Jaume de Marcos tried to explain Servet's intentions when he said: "His intention was not to reform Christianity, but to restore it to its original state before it was deformed by vain interpretations. He did not want to develop a new Christian doctrine more attractive to the believers of other religions, but to keep the truth alive. And only this awakened truth was strong enough to tear down all the barriers that prevented harmony between people. If Judaism and Islam succeeded to preserved in their respective doctrines the truth about God and Christ, it was necessary that Christianity correct its error, which began at Nicaea and remained so for more than a thousand years."

It should be remembered that Servet was born in a Spain, which had just emerged from 800 years of Muslim rule and influence. Similarly, after the disappearance of Arianism, Unitarianism was reborn in the middle of the 16th century in Central Europe, Poland, Lithuania, and Transylvania, on the borders of the Christian and Ottoman Muslim empires.

While it is difficult to prove a direct influence of Islam on the Unitarians, there is no doubt that an affinity exists between them and the Muslim religion. One of them, Stephen Nye (1648-1719), describes Muhammad as a man who seeks to "restore belief in the unity of God, which at that time had been replaced among Eastern Christians by the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. "Muhammad," he continues, "never claimed that his religion should be considered a new one, but only as a restitution of the true Christian religion."¹

¹ *A Letter of Resolution Concerning the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation*, London, 1691, p. 18.

La Croze (1661-1739), a former Benedictine monk converted to Protestantism, wrote in his *Historical Dissertations on various subjects* that the Unitarians "state that Alcoran is one of their reference books"¹. In fact, Unitarians like Servet drew arguments against the dogma of the Trinity from the Koran.

Among the famous Unitarians was Isaac Newton. Stephen Snobelen, a Canadian historian specializing in Newton's theological and prophetic writings, mentions that Newton was opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity. Thomas Pfizenmaier, whose views convinced only a few, confirms that Newton was closer to Islamic doctrine or to Eastern Orthodox thought on Trinity than to Western thought shared by Roman Catholics, Anglicans and most Protestants.

2- The influence of Islam on individuals

The example of Napoleon

Christian Cherfils (1858-1926) was a French sociologist who, in his book *Bonaparte and Islam*, showed "the persistence of the profound effect that the religion of the prophet, whom he loved, had on Bonaparte."²For this reason, he reproduces certain texts of the French emperor from his memoirs, such as this one: "Islam attacks the polytheists in particular; there is no god but God, and Muhammad is His Messenger. This is the foundation of the Muslim religion, which is basically to consecrate the great truth declared by Moses and confirmed by Jesus Christ."³

The French Emperor points out "as worthy of note that, from the same corner of the earth, the three types of worship

¹ *Dissertations historiques sur divers sujets*, Rotterdam, R. Leers, 1707.

² *Bonaparte et l'Islam*, Christian Cherfils, Alcazar publishing, 2016, p. 187.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 197.

appeared, uprooted polytheism and covered the entire world with the knowledge of the one single God."¹But Bonaparte emphasizes the dazzling expansion of Islam: "Muhammad was a prince; he rallied his compatriots around him. Within a few years, his followers conquered half the world. They snatched more souls from false gods, overthrew more idols, and turned upside down more pagan temples in fifteen years than the sectarians of Moses and Jesus Christ failed to do in fifteen centuries. Muhammad was a great man."²

Dozens of Napoleon's quite pro-Islamic declarations like these, led Christian Cherfils and others to assert that the French emperor had converted to Islam. Christian Cherfils even confirmed that Napoleon's adherence to Islam is a historical fact reported by the press at that time. The letters sent by Napoleon to certain Muslim leaders are, from this point of view, unambiguous. Thus, he once began a letter addressed to the sheriff of Makkah saying: "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful! There is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet!"³The truth is that anyone who utters these words honestly is a true Muslim. On August 15, 1799 he sent another message to the Sultan of Morocco, beginning it as follows: "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet! In the name of God the clement, the merciful! To the Sultan of Morocco, servant of the Holy Kasbah, powerful among kings, and faithful observer of the law of the true prophet."⁴Before the governors and religious leaders of Cairo, he delivered this speech: "Ulemas and Lords, I am surprised at the sorrow that

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 195.

² *Ibidem*, p. 94.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

my victory has caused to you. Therefore, you do not yet know how to appreciate me, although I have often told you and repeated to you that I am a Muslim, that I believe in the unity of God, that I respect the Prophet Muhammad, and that I love Muslims."¹

Some, however, point out that these letters and this profession of faith took place during the Egyptian campaign. Accordingly, these words have nothing but a despicable political goal to win over the hearts of the religious authorities and the population against the sworn enemy: England. This is how these unequivocal words are explained by those who do not want to see in them a proof of Napoleon's conversion to Islam. However, this hypothesis is undermined by the judgments that the fallen emperor made about Islam in Saint Helena where he was exiled and where he has no interest in incensing this religion. It was there, in fact, that Napoleon pronounced the most favorable words to Islam and to its prophet, stating for example: "Then at the end, at a certain point in history, a man called Mahomet appeared. And this man said the same as Moses, Jesus and all the other prophets said: There is only one God. That was the message of Islam. Islam is the true religion. The more people read and become intelligent, the more they will become familiar with logic and reasoning. They will abandon idols or rituals that support polytheism, and they will recognize that there is only One God. And therefore, I hope that the time will come soon when Islam will prevail in the world."²

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 72.

² *Correspondance de Napoléon 1^{er} - Journal inédit de Sainte Héène, de 1815 à 1818* (Général Gourgaud), Napoléon Bonaparte, Comon et cie, 1847, vol. 5, p. 518.

He also said while on the island of St. Helen: "Jesus claims to be the Son of God and he is one of the descendants of David! I prefer the religion of Muhammad; it is less ridiculous than ours"¹ or again: "Muhammad's religion is the most beautiful".²

If there is no certainty that Napoleon converted to Islam, then it is certain that one of his generals during the campaign against Egypt, Jacques Menou, Baron de Boussay, crossed the Rubicon to convert to Islam. Menou comes from a very ancient family and, very early, he became involved in Freemasonry and joined the army. In 1798 he took command of one of the five divisions of the Eastern Army during the campaign against Egypt. This is the place where he converted to Islam and was called by the name Abdullah. After Bonaparte's swift return to France in 1799 and the assassination of General Kléber the following year, Menou succeeded him at the head of the Egyptian army as General-in-Chief.

The Case of Ignác Goldziher

Goldziher (1850-1921), the famous Hungarian Jewish orientalist, was so influenced by Islam that, at some point in his life, he came to consider himself a true Muslim. His admiration for Islam began when he traveled to the East around 1873, when he was only 23 years old. He visited Istanbul, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem and Cairo where he became the first European to attend the famous Al-Azhar University. In Damascus, Goldziher joined a group of young

¹ *Journal de Sainte-Hélène 1815-1818* (Gourgaud), Napoléon Bonaparte, éd. Flammarion, 1944, vol. 2, p. 226.

² *Journal de Sainte-Hélène 1815-1818* (Gourgaud), Napoléon Bonaparte, éd. Flammarion, 1944, vol. 1, p. 312.

reformers, and in Cairo he befriended Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani.

During those weeks," he says, "I really entered the spirit of Islam, to the point where I became completely convinced that I am a Muslim, and I wisely decided that it was the only religion that, even in its organization and in its doctrinal and official formulation, could satisfy a philosophical spirit. My ideal is to bring Judaism to the same level of rationality. My experience has taught me that Islam is the only religion in which superstition and pagan elements are condemned not by rationalism but by the orthodox doctrine itself."¹

Thus, Goldziher admits to having become a Muslim, but never ceased to be Jewish. He further describes his feelings while studying at Al-Azhar: "My way of thinking was completely oriented toward Islam; subjectively, my compassion pushed me in that direction as well. I called my monotheism Islam and I did not lie when I said that I believe in the prophecies of Muhammad. My copy of the Koran can testify to my inner inclination toward Islam. My teachers were looking forward, in good faith, to the moment I would announce my conversion to Islam."²

The Effect of the Koran on Souls

It is Allah Who has sent down the best message - a Book of perfect consistency and repeated lessons - which causes the skin and hearts of those who fear their Lord to tremble, then their skin and hearts soften at the mention of the mercy of Allah. (Koran 39, 23)

Anyone who does not know Arabic, the language in which

¹ *Tagebuch*, Ignác Goldziher, Brill, Leyde, 1978, p. 59.

² *Ibidem*, p. 71.

the Koran was revealed, cannot understand the effect of the Koranic text and its impact on the souls. This was realized by certain orientalist scholars like Joseph-Charles Mardrus (1868-1949) who wrote in the introduction to his French translation of the Koran: "As for the style of the Koran, it is the personal style of Allah. Since style is the essence of being, it can only be divine here. Indeed, even the most skeptical writers are fascinated by it. Its hold on the 300 million Muslims around the world is so strong that foreign missionaries agree that there has not yet been a single proven case of Muslim apostasy [...] This language, heard for the first time by Bedouin ears, is essentially a new kind of prose, full of grandeur, rhyme, alliteration, stunning, and whose implications are always profound for any Arabic-speaking listener."¹

The German poet Goethe, who studied Arabic, emphasizes the hold of the Koran on souls and the influence of the Koranic style on spirits: "So whenever we read it, from the very beginning, it (the Koran) repels us. But suddenly we feel tempted, surprised, and we end up admiring it. It has a style consistent with its content. Its purpose is rigorous, grandiose, terrible, and eternally sublime. This book will continue to have a profound impact on the times to come."²

Therefore, contemporaries of the Prophet were fascinated by the style of the Koran: "The first time that Ukba, Rebia's son, heard this vibrant, flowery and rhythmic language, although not versified, he returned to his people in astonishment, and they asked him saying: "What happened?"

¹ *Le Koran qui est la guidance et le différenciateur. Traduction littérale et complète des sourates essentielles*, Mardrus, Eugène Fasquelle, Paris, 1926, p. 19-20.

² *Divan Occidental-oriental*, Goethe, traduction : Henri Lichtenberger, 1930, p. 341.

He replied, "My goodness! Mahomet has spoken to me in a language I have never heard anything like it. It is neither poetry nor magic, nor fortune-telling, rather it is a penetrating speech."¹

Muhammad himself was not unmoved by the power and beauty of the Koran. One of his companions, Abdullah ibn Masud, reports that the Prophet told him one day: "Read the Koran to me. Surprised, the companion said: "O Messenger of God! Shall I read the Koran to you and it is to you that it was sent?" He replied: "yes but I would love to hear it from someone else". The companion then began to recite to him the fourth Sura (Sura of Women), but was soon interrupted by the Prophet at this verse: "So how will it be when We bring a witness from every faith-community and bring you 'O Prophet' as a witness against yours?" Then the companion turned to the prophet and saw that his eyes were brimming with tears.²

¹ *Mahomet et les origines de l'islamisme*, Renan, in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1851.

² Bukhari, 4781.

Chapter 4

Response to some criticisms of Islam

The two main criticisms leveled against Islam concern its alleged violence and the status of women. Islam would therefore be both a religion of terror and misogynistic. To prove the nonsense of such allegations, we will again return to the texts of Islam, which we will compare with those of the Bible.

1- Islam is a violent religion

Two well-known historical examples suffice to show the falsehood of this claim. First, the conquest of Jerusalem by Umar, the second caliph of Islam, compared to the Crusaders' conquest of the holy city. Gustave Le Bon describes Umar's entry into Jerusalem saying: "The behavior of Caliph Umar in Jerusalem illustrates the gentle way in which the Arab invaders treat the defeated, which is in stark contrast to the methods of the Crusaders, in the same city, centuries after that incident. Umar chose not to enter the Holy City except with a few of his companions, and asked the Patriarch Sophronius to accompany him on the visit he wanted to make to all the places consecrated by religious tradition, then he announced to the residents that they are safe, and that any harm will not be caused to their property or their churches and that Muhammadans could not perform their prayers in the Christian churches. Nor was Amru's behavior in Egypt less respectful. He offered the inhabitants complete religious freedom, impartial justice for all, inviolability of property, and

the replacement of the arbitrary and excessive taxes imposed by the Greek emperors with an annual tribute of 15 francs per head. The inhabitants of the provinces were satisfied with these proposals to the extent that they were quick to join the treaty and pay the tribute in advance. The Arabs were so respectful of the accepted conventions and made themselves so agreeable to the population, previously subjected to the harassment of the Christian agents of the Emperor of Constantinople, that all Egypt eagerly adopted their religion and language. This is, I repeat, one of the results that can never be achieved by force. None of the peoples who ruled Egypt before the Arabs got it."¹

The second example concerns Andalusia, which remained under Muslim rule for eight centuries before the Reconquista. The French sociologist Gustave Le Bon relates: "The ninth century of the Hegira witnessed the complete fall of the power and civilization of the Arabs in Spain, where they had reigned for nearly eight hundred years. In 1492, Ferdinand seized Granada, their last capital, and proceeded to the mass expulsions and massacres that his successors continued. Three million Arabs were soon killed or driven out, and their wonderful civilization, which had shone on Europe for eight centuries, died out forever."²

Let us now mention some biblical texts, among many others, that clearly incite violence and terror:

1. "But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee *for* an inheritance, thou shalt save

¹ *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

² *Ibidem*.

alive nothing that breatheth"¹

2. "And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword."²
3. "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves."³
4. "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."⁴
5. "Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:" "Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women."⁵
6. "Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished."⁶
7. "That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great,

¹ Deuteronomy 20, 16.

² Joshua 6, 21.

³ Numbers 31, 17-18.

⁴ 1 Samuel 15, 3.

⁵ Ezekiel 9, 5-6.

⁶ Isaiah 13, 16.

whether man or woman."¹

8. "Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up."²

9. "And he brought out the people that *were* in it, and cut *them* with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem."³

These texts, of a violence that Christians probably cannot imagine, must be compared with the recommendations that the Prophet addressed to his companions who were going to battle: "Do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (the dead) bodies; do not kill the children."⁴

Roger du Pasquier wrote on this subject, saying: "Like the Prophet who imposed on Muslim fighters the respect of the defeated and unarmed enemy, the Muslims sought, when they were forced to go to war, to make it as humane as possible. Their moderate and very tolerant stance won them the sympathy of the population in the lands that their armies invaded, and indeed in many regions, as in some provinces of the Byzantine Empire where they were welcomed as liberators. In all the conquered countries, Islam has always accepted the presence of many important groups professing other religions. But in the opposite direction, when Christians

¹ 2 Chronicles 15, 13.

² Hosea 13, 16.

³ 1 Chronicles 20, 3.

⁴ Muslim, 1731.

occupied Spain, for example, all Muslims were massacred, forcibly turned away from Islam, or expelled."¹

As a document of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians entitled *Guidelines for Christian-Muslim Dialogue* (1970) aptly explains, "Jihad is by no means the biblical kherem; it does not aim at the extermination but at the extension of the rights of God and man to new lands." It is also a way for believers to defend themselves: "Fight in the cause of Allah 'only' against those who wage war against you, but do not exceed the limits. Allah does not like transgressors."² Do not exceed the limits," that is, according to Muslim scholars, without maiming enemy combatants, killing women, children and the elderly, executing monks and hermits, attacking those who do not fight, killing animals or burning trees and crops.

Moreover, Muslims are required to accept any peace offer made by the enemy. The Most High says: "So if they refrain from fighting you and offer you peace, then Allah does not permit you to harm them."³ God invites Muslims to be kind to those of their opponents who refrain from fighting them. He said: "Allah does not forbid you from dealing kindly and fairly with those who have neither fought nor driven you out of your homes. Surely Allah loves those who are fair."⁴

The word "peace" and its derivatives are mentioned at least 140 times in the Koran, while the word "war" and its derivatives appear only 6 times. This is sufficient to dispel

¹ *Découverte de l'islam*, Les trois continents, 1985, p. 65.

² Koran 2, 190.

³ Koran 4, 90.

⁴ Koran 60, 8.

some of the preconceptions about Islam. Some may then ask why there is so much violence committed today in the name of Islam. Two explanations can be put forward, one of which complements the other. The first is the ignorance of some Muslims, generally young and without religious knowledge, and the second is the use of this ignorance by some for political purposes. Of course, ISIS is the clearest example of this. Today, no one can deny the fact that the self-proclaimed Islamic State is America's creation to fight the Syrian regime and its allies. In support of our assertions, we will mention the testimonies of personalities who can hardly be accused of conspiracy. Let's start with that of General Vincent Desportes, associate professor at Sciences Po, who, before the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defense and Armed Forces Committee, declared on December 17, 2014, about ISIS: "Who is Dr. Frankenstein who created this monster? Let's state it clearly, because it has consequences: it is the United States. Out of short-term political interest, other actors - some of them pretending to be friends with the West - other actors therefore, out of complacency or deliberate will, have contributed to this creation and to its reinforcement. But the first responsibility lies with the United States." Another unambiguous statement is that of General Wesley Clark, former commander of the NATO armed forces, who declared on February 11, 2015 on the American channel CNN that the Islamic state was an American-Israeli creation to inflict defeat on Hezbollah.

The most interesting thing is that even before their appearance, the Prophet announced the emergence of these men, whom he described as "young fools," "more ready to kill Muslims than pagans," an announcement that we could have added to those mentioned in the previous section as proof of

the authenticity of the Prophet's mission so precisely carried out.

As a reminder, more than 90% of the victims of Islamic terrorism are Muslims. Thus, according to the Foundation for Political Innovation, a French Think Tank that studied Islamist attacks around the world between 1979 and 2019, 91.2% of the victims of Islamist terrorism are Muslims.

2- Islam is a misogynistic religion

One of the Prophet's last recommendations to his companions during his farewell pilgrimage was: "I recommend that you treat your wives well." And he never ceased during his lifetime to urge Muslims to treat their wives well, telling them: "The believers whose faith is the most perfect are those who behave best, and the best of you are those who behave best with their wives."¹

These words of the Prophet about women are to be compared to those of Paul, which will surprise many:

1. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ is God."²
2. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law."³
3. "Let your wives be silent in the assemblies, for they have no duty to speak; but let them be submissive, as the Law

¹ Tirmidhi, 1162.

² 1 Corinthians 11, 3.

³ 1 Corinthians 14, 34.

also says."¹

4. "The woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."²

The Old Testament also considers the woman to be inferior to the man: "If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days [...] But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks."³ Islamic law makes no difference between boys and girls: a woman, after giving birth, ceases to pray for a maximum period of forty days, regardless of the sex of the newborn.

The high percentage of women among converts is undeniable proof that Islam is not a misogynistic religion. These would represent nearly three-quarters of the converts and among them are even feminists, such as Dominique Thewissen, author of the book *Psy, a convert to Islam and feminist*, or Susan Janet Carland, an Australian academic and television host. But is this so surprising? Didn't Islam, at its advent, grant women rights that no religion, no civilization, had attributed to them until then? Take the symbolic case of inheritance for which Islam is often accused of discrimination. Hebrew law excludes women from inheritance, as this passage from the Torah shows: "And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, if a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that

¹ 1 Corinthians 11, 7-9.

² 1 Corinthetaiens 11, 7-9.

³ Leviticus 12, 2-5.

is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses."¹

The daughter therefore only inherits if the deceased leaves no sons. And the sister has no right to inherit, even if she has no brothers. The Koran, on the other hand, gives the daughter a share of the inheritance even if there are boys, which makes Islamic law one of the most egalitarian ones of its time. But, critics of Islam say, the girl receives only half the share of the boy: "The share of the male will be twice that of the female."² They forget to finish the verse that continues: "Each parent is entitled to one-sixth if you leave offspring"³, for it should be noted that in most cases, the woman inherits the same share as the man. Better still, in ten situations, the woman receives more than the man, for example, if a woman dies leaving a husband, the latter receives a quarter, and a daughter, she gets half of the inheritance. The man, on the other hand, only receives more than the woman in four situations. There are even cases where the woman inherits at the expense of the man who is totally deprived of inheritance.

In his book, *"Arab Civilization,"* Gustave Le Bon, corrects many prejudices about the place of women in Islam. He writes: "Islam did not limit itself to merely accepting polygamy, which existed before it, but rather exercised a great influence on the status of women in the East. Far from diminishing them, as is blindly repeated, it has, on the contrary, considerably elevated their social status and role. As I explained when studying the Arab inheritance law, the Koran treats them much better than most of our European

¹ Numbers 27, 8-11.

² Koran 4, 11.

³ Koran 4, 11.

codes. It undoubtedly makes it possible to separate from them, as is the case with European codes that recognize divorce; but it formally states that "an honest maintenance is due to repudiated women." The best way to understand the extent of Islam's influence on the condition of women in the East is to know what that condition was like before the Koran and what it was like after."¹Further on, he adds: "From the Arabs, as we have seen, the inhabitants of Europe borrowed the laws of chivalry and gallant respect for women that these laws prescribed. Thus, it is not Christianity, as it is generally believed, but Islam that raised women and pulled them out of the low status in which they had been held until then. The lords of the first medieval period, although they were Christians, gave them little consideration. The reading of our ancient chronicles leaves no illusions on this point. Before the Arabs taught the Christians to treat women with respect, our hard-hearted warriors treated them very harshly during the feudal period."² In conclusion, he repeats: "We can therefore conclude, by repeating what we have said above, that, far from having degraded women, Islam has raised their status to a higher level. Moreover, we are not, the first to support this opinion, already defended by Caussin de Perceval, and more recently by Mr. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire. Islam raised the status of women, and we can add that it was the first religion to do so. It is easy to prove this by showing how much women have been mistreated by all religions and peoples that preceded the Arabs. We have already explained this point in our last book and only have to repeat what we said there to convince the reader. The Greeks generally viewed women as inferior creatures only suitable for caring for a family and

¹ *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

² *Ibidem*.

childbearing. Whenever one of them gave birth to a deformed being, she would be disposed of. "In Sparta," writes Mr. Troplong, "they killed this poor creature who gave the State no hope of a healthy and vigorous soldier." "When a woman was fertile," adds the same author, "one could borrow her from her husband to give the fatherland children of another strain." Even in the hey days of their civilization, the Greeks had little esteem except for the hetaeras. They were the only women who had received some education. All the ancient lawmakers showed the same harshness towards women. The Digest of Hindu Laws treats them very poorly. "The final destiny, wind, death, hellish regions, poison, poisonous snakes and devouring fire," it says, "are no worse than the woman." The Bible is not much more compassionate; it asserts that the woman is "more bitter than death. "whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her" says Ecclesiastes. "One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." The proverbs of different peoples are not more woman-friendly: "You must listen to your wife but never believe her," says the Chinese. The Russian maintains "that in ten women there is only one soul." The Italian advises the use of the spur for a good as well as for a bad horse, and the stick for a good as well as for a bad woman. The Spaniard recommends staying away from the bad woman and distrusting the good woman. All codes: Hindu, Greek, Roman and modern, have treated the woman as a slave or a child. The law of Manu states that : "During her childhood, a woman depends on her father, during her youth on her husband, and if her husband dies, on her children, and if she does not have children, on her husband's close relatives, because a woman should not be as independent as she wants." The Greek and Roman laws asserted more or less exactly the

same thing. In Rome, the husband's power over his wife was absolute. She was a slave who counted for nothing in society, could have no judge but her husband, who had the right of life and death over her. Greek law did not treat the woman any better; she was given no rights, not even the right to inherit."¹

The Irish writer George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) affirmed that Islamic law was more advanced than the European law of his time: "Prophet Muhammad's teachings, such as the status of women, consideration for daughters, and compassion for animals, were far ahead of Western Christian views and even ahead of modern views."²

¹ *Ibidem*.

² *Developing Human Rights Jurisprudence*, Commonwealth Secretariat, 5/159.

Part Four

The Achievements of a Prophet

Introduction

The French poet Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869) sums up Muhammad's work in a few words: "Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult devoid of images, founder of twenty earthly empires and a spiritual empire. That is Mahomet! On all the scales on which we measure human greatness, what man could be greater?"¹ The American writer Michael Hart, in his book entitled *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, answers bluntly Lamartine's question, placing Muhammad at the head of the most influential men and women in the history of humanity, ahead of Isaac Newton, Jesus, Buddha, Confucius and Paul of Tarsus. He wrote: "Some readers may be surprised to see me putting Muhammad on top of the most powerful figures in the world, and others may protest against my choice. Nevertheless, Muhammad is the only man in the world who has succeeded par excellence on two levels: the religious and the secular."²

The German poet Goethe, for whom Muhammad is the prophet par excellence³, also acknowledges the greatness of his work: "Enormous is the work accomplished by Muhammad. Through the concept of the Unique, he subjugated the entire universe."⁴

After having shown, in the preceding part, the influence of Islam on thoughts, morals and individuals, we will describe in this part the influence of Islam on History, especially through the conquests made by Muslims on most of the ancient world, and through what Islamic civilization has brought to the West.

¹ *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris, 1854, tome I, livre 1, p. 280.

² *A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, Michael Hart, 1978.

³ *Mahomet l'européen*, John Tolan, Albin Michel, Paris, 2018, p. 9.

⁴ *Mahomet l'européen*, John Tolan, Albin Michel, Paris, 2018, p. 9.

Chapter 1

The Expansion of Islam in its Early Days

1- Dazzling conquests

In his reference book "*The Arab Civilization*," Gustave Le Bon describes the rapidity of the Muslim conquests that began after the death of the Prophet Muhammad: "The first conquests of Mahomet's successors were in ancient Babylonia, where Persia ruled, and in Syria, where the Emperor of Constantinople, Heraclius, ruled. They began under the Prophet's first successor, who died soon after, but were continued by Umar, who himself entered Jerusalem. Syria, which had been occupied by the Romans for seven centuries, was taken back from them in seven years. Mesopotamia and Persia were soon subdued by Umar's soldiers: two months were enough to overthrow the last of the Sassanids and conquer the centuries-old empire of the king of kings. In the west, the troops sent by Umar, under the command of Amru, the poet and warrior, achieved rapid success. Egypt and Nubia were soon conquered, and when Umar died in 644, the Arabian Empire, founded barely twenty years before, was already very large."¹ The French sociologist summarizes the first Muslim conquests as follows: "By the end of the first century of the Hijra, the Prophet's flag was flying from India to the Atlantic, from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf, and one of the largest Christian kingdoms in Europe,

¹ *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

Spain, was subject to Mahomet 's law."¹

The Italian orientalist Laura Veccia Vaglieri describes an unprecedented expansion that dazzled and muted commentators: "Such a phenomenon had never before been witnessed in history. It is difficult to appreciate the speed with which Islam accomplished its conquests and changed from the religion of a few enthusiasts to that of millions of men. It is still a puzzle to the human mind to discover what were the secret forces which enabled rough warriors to triumph over people so far their superiors in civilization, wealth, experience and ability to wage war."²

The men of the Church themselves cannot but acknowledge the initial triumph of Islam. Michel d'Herbigny (1880-1957), Catholic bishop and Orientalist, did not hide his surprise: "Muhammad's achievements are truly astounding. Their range and speed and durability far surpassed Napoleon's. A genius of temporal and spiritual conquest transforms in a few years the political aspect of the known universe, its religious geography and the dispositions of souls - few in number then - and continue for thirteen centuries to be counted by millions and tens of millions. The two great rival and secular empires that dominated the world and reached the height of their scope and power - that of the Persians and that of Byzantine Rome - were shaken in the first clash. They were subjected to a fatal blow, after which they collapsed one immediately, the other after a long agony. Simultaneously, polytheistic idolatry yielded to monotheism in the vast kingdoms it had ruled for thousands of years. But at the same time, Christianity lost the provinces of Asia from which it had previously emerged, Egypt, North Africa, Spain,

¹ *Ibidem.*

² *An Interpretation of Islam*, Laura Veccia Vaglieri, Goodword Books, New Delhi, 2004, p. 18.

and soon the Balkans."¹

In fact, the historical centers of Christianity fell one after another, Antioch in 636, Jerusalem in 638, Alexandria in 642, followed by Constantinople. Of the five patriarchates, only Rome escaped the Muslim conquest, mainly because of its geographical location.

2- Causes of the expansion

Islam propagated by the sword?

The widely spread idea in the West that Islam was propagated by the sword has been debunked by many specialists, including Gustave Le Bon who wrote: "When we study the conquests of the Arabs, and try to find out the secret of their victory, we will realize that force is not the one with which the Koran spread, because the Arabs always leave the defeated free to keep their religion. If some Christian peoples adopted the religion of their conquerors and eventually their language, it was mainly because these new conquerors were fairer to them than their former masters and because their religion was much simpler than what they had been taught up to that point. If there is one fact that has been well proven by history, it is that a religion is never imposed by force. When the Arabs of Spain were defeated by the Christians, they preferred death and expulsion to a change of religion."²

The French sociologist adds: "The Koran, far from being imposed by force, was spread by persuasion. Moreover, it is clear that persuasion alone led to its adoption by peoples who later defeated the Arabs, such as the Turks and the Mongols. In India, where the Arabs were just passing through, the Koran has spread so far that it now has more than fifty million followers. Their number increases

¹ *L'islam naissant*, Michel d'Herbigny, 1929, p. 24.

² *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

every day and although the English are now the rulers of the country and that they have there an army of missionaries seeking to convert Muslims to Christianity, no sure example is known that indicates the success of their endeavors. The diffusion of the Koran in China has been no less considerable. We will see in another chapter how rapid the propagation of Islam was there. Although the Arabs never conquered the slightest piece of the Celestial Empire, Muslims today form a population of more than twenty million individuals."

And we will see in another chapter how quickly people reacted to the call of Islam there. Although the Arabs never occupied a single inch of the Celestial Empire (China), Muslims today make up more than 20 million of individuals."¹

Gustave Le Bon also sees the continued presence of Islam in the conquered countries, despite the decline and fall of the Muslim empire, as evidence of his claim that "the civilization established by the followers of Mahomet had the same fate as all those that lived on the face of the globe: birth, growth, decline and death. It has disappeared into thin air as did those that had gone before it. Moreover, time did not affect the prophet's dogmas, and today their influence is as alive as it ever was. While the older religions are daily losing some of their hold over souls, the law of Mahomet retains all its power."²

Henry de Castries, categorically rejects the view that Islam was spread by the sword: "If the religion of Mahomet did not spread except by the violence of the Arab conquerors, its spread would have ceased with the cessation of the conquests, while the Koran did not stop spreading throughout the universe."³

¹ *Ibidem*

² *Ibidem*

³ *L'Islam : impressions et études*, Henry de Castries, A. Colin, Paris, 1907, p. 182.

More recently, Wilfried Hofmann, former German ambassador, wrote: "The West continues to perpetuate the myth it invented itself that Islam spread only by sword and fire." He adds further: "It is astonishing that this myth still exists even today, while Islam lost the power it had in ancient times and that Muslims, in spite of this, are more attached to their religion than ever before in countries such as Kashmir, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Chechnya. Still better, thousands of Americans and Europeans convert to Islam every year, not to mention the countries that have fully converted to Islam without a single Muslim fighter ever setting foot on their soil! Thus, we find in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines more Muslims than there are in Arab countries. The same applies to Muslim Africa, if we exclude North Africa."¹

Laura Veccia Vaglieri confirms: "The spread of Islam was not achieved by force or by the continuous efforts of the preachers, but by the book that Muslims carried to the peoples they defeated and to whom they left the choice to accept or to reject it, the Book of God and the word of truth, the greatest miracle that Muhammad brought to the undecided people of this world. While all other religions place a heavy burden of creeds on their followers that they cannot bear and understand, Islam is wonderfully simple and extraordinarily straightforward. It is as clear as crystal."²

The simplicity of dogma

It seems that the simplicity of the Muslim faith was instrumental in the expansion of Islam, as Gustave Le Bon confirms: "Islam can claim the honor of having been the first religion to bring pure monotheism to the world. It is from this pure monotheism that the great simplicity of Islam stems, and it is in this simplicity that the

¹ *Islam 2000*, Hofmann, Amana Publications, USA, 1997.

² *Apologia dell' Islamismo*, A. F. Formiggini, Rome, 1925.

secret of its power lies. A religion that is easy to understand and which spares its followers all kinds of mysteries and contradictions that abound in other religions, which often shock the common sense. An absolutely unique God to be worshipped. All people are equal before Him; a small number of commandments to be observed, paradise as a reward for observing them, hell as a punishment for not observing them. Nothing is clearer or less ambiguous. Any Muslim, regardless of the class to which he belongs, knows exactly what he must believe in and can even explain this belief in a few words. As for the Christian who ventures to speak of the Trinity, transubstantiation or any other similar mystery, he must be familiar with theology and well-versed in all the subtleties of dialectics. This extreme clarity of Islam, together with the feeling of charity and justice with which it is imbued, has certainly contributed much to its spread throughout the world. Such qualities explain how populations that had long been Christian, such as the Egyptians at the time of the domination of the emperors of Constantinople, adopted the dogmas of the Prophet as soon as they knew them, whereas no Muslim people, victorious or vanquished, has ever become Christian."¹

The sympathetic attitude of the conquerors

The French sociologist puts forward another explanation for the spread and persistence of Islam in conquered territories at the beginning of Muslim expansion: the tolerance and justice of the conquerors. He writes: "This tolerance and gentleness, so little known to historians, were one of the reasons for the rapidity with which the Arab conquests spread as well as the main reason for the ease with which their religion, institutions and language were accepted everywhere. We know that they became so firmly established among the peoples who welcomed them that they

¹ *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

withstood all invasions and survived the Arabs after their disappearance from the world scene. This fact is particularly striking in the case of Egypt. The Persians, Greeks and Romans who ruled the area never succeeded in overthrowing the ancient Pharaonic civilization and replacing it with their own."¹

The Muslim religion was so well received by the conquered peoples that they became themselves conquerors of Islam and extended the original movement: the Iranians pushed towards Central Asia and the Syro-Egyptians set off towards North Africa, while the North African Berbers trekked towards Spain and Sicily.

The ideal proposed to the populations

However, according to Le Bon, the main reason for the dazzling expansion of Islam was spiritual and religious in nature: "The ideals created by Mahomet was exclusively religious, and the empire established by the Arabs was the only great empire to be founded entirely in the name of a religion, a peculiar phenomenon in that all its political and social institutions were derived from that religion. Is this omnipotent element, this ideal, when added to the ones we have listed, enough to explain the greatness of the Arabs? Not at all. We have, however, come a little further than we did a moment ago. The old world is crumbling, a people full of warlike qualities, and united in a single bundle by common beliefs and ready to undertake its conquest. It still has to win it over and above all to keep it."²

Divine wisdom?

Far from any material explanation, some people did not hesitate to describe the early expansion of Islam as a miracle. This is the case of Roger du Pasquier who wrote: "Another miracle of Islam was its

¹ *Ibidem.*

² *Ibidem.*

stupendous expansion in the first two centuries following the mission of the Prophet. Indeed, the speed and extent of the Arab conquests and the weakness of the means used in comparison with the results achieved all this stunned the world and baffled historians who often pointed out an "impenetrable mysterious aspect." There are certainly other examples of sudden and big conquests, but in general, all of the empires that were quickly constituted collapsed just as quickly, and hardly survived their founder."¹

Lamartine also presents the triumph of Islam as a miracle: "Never before did a man voluntarily or involuntarily set himself a higher goal, just because such goal was superhuman: to undermine the superstitions interposed between the creature and the Creator, to return God to man and man to God, to restore the rational and holy idea of the Divinity in this chaos of material and disfigured gods of idolatry. Never before did a man execute a task so disproportionate to human strength with such meager means, where he had no tools but himself and other assistants to conceive and execute such a great plan than a handful of barbarians in a corner of the desert [...] If the grandeur of the goal, the meager means, and the magnitude of the result are the three measures of man's genius, who will dare, from a human point of view, to compare a great man in modern history with Mahomet? The most famous have only mobilized weapons, laws, empires; they have only founded (when indeed they have founded something) material powers whose collapse often comes before their own. As for Islam it has mobilized armies, legislations, empires, peoples, dynasties, millions of men on a third of the inhabited globe; but he also stirred up altars, gods, religions, ideas, creeds, souls. He has founded, on a book of which every letter has become law, a spiritual nationality which includes peoples of all languages and races, and he has inculcated, as an indelible character

¹ *Découverte de l'islam*, Roger du Pasquier, Les trois continents, 1985, p. 64.

of this Muslim nationality, the hatred of false gods, and the attachment to the one and immaterial God. This patriotism, which retaliates against the blasphemy of heaven, was the virtue of the children of Mahomet: the adhesion of a third of the earth to his dogma was his miracle, or rather it was not the miracle of a man, but of reason."¹

Laura Veccia Vaglieri, for her part, sees in the initial expansion of Islam a divine wisdom: "Disturbed by such a profound political and religious transformation, men asked themselves what had brought it about? But many of them were blind or purposely closed their eyes, wandering long and hopelessly in a labyrinth of wrong conjectures. They could not realize that only a holy force could have supplied the first impulse for such a vast movement. They did not want to believe that the wisdom of God alone was responsible for the mission of Muhammad, the last of the great law-bearing Prophets, the one who forever concluded their series. Such a mission had to be a universal mission for all mankind without distinction of nationality, country or race. They were either blind or did not want to see. These people went on spreading the word that the essence of Islam was violent aggression. They claimed it was a religion imposed by the sword; they charged it with intolerance. They accused Muhammad himself of lying, of cruelty and of lust. They tried to demolish his admirable work of social and religious reform. They tried to make the devotion of his companions and followers appear as selfish interest, and represented them as people animated only by a desire for wealth and worldly prosperity."²

In the 18th century, Boulainvilliers already depicted the Prophet as an inspired messenger, sent by God with the intention of

¹ *Histoire de la Turquie*, Lamartine, Librairie du constitutionnel, Paris, 1854, vol. 1, p. 276-278.

² *An Interpretation of Islam*, Vaglieri, Goodword Books, New Delhi, 2004, p. 22.

confusing Christians and spreading the knowledge of the oneness of God from India to Spain: "Since the fame of this personage was made without natural means, the success can only be God's, whom the impious would accuse of misleading half the world and violently destroying his own revelation."¹

The believer cannot help but wonder about the reasons for the initial successes of Islam and the spread it has achieved today. Is it possible to imagine that the God of justice allowed and still allows such an expansion of Islam unless it really was the religion that He wanted for humanity? All the more since, as we saw earlier, it seems that the advent of the Muslim empire is a fulfillment of the promise He made to Abraham through his son Ishmael, the grandfather of the Arabs, and the realization of Daniel's prophecy, which heralded the advent of an empire that will bring about the fall of the Roman Empire.

Voltaire reminds us that nothing happens on earth without the will of the Creator of the universe: "The greatest change that opinion has brought about on our globe was the establishment of the religion of Mahomet. In less than a century, his Muslims conquered an empire larger than the Roman Empire. This revolution, so great for us, is in reality, only as an atom that has changed its place in the immensity of things, and in the myriad worlds that fill space; but at least it is an event that one must look at as one of the wheels of the universe machine, and as a necessary effect of the eternal and immutable laws: for can anything happen that has not been decreed by the Master of all things? Nothing is but what must be."²

3- The contribution of Islamic civilization

¹ *La Vie de Mahomed*, Boulainvilliers, Amsterdam, P. Humbert, 1730, p. 179.

² *Remarque pour servir de supplément à l'Essai sur les Mœurs*, dans *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, Moland, 1875, tome 24, p. 588.

Historians today are unanimous to recognize the role of Islamic civilization in the transfer of Greek science and philosophy to Europe. Muslim Spain was at that time the main center for the spread of this civilization. The example of the mathematical sciences speaks for itself. It is not only Greek science that was transmitted to the West through the Islamic civilization, but also Hindu science. Aren't the figures used in Europe known as "Arabic numerals"? Who knows that the term algebra (al-jabr) is Arabic? In fact to be convinced of the influence of Islamic civilization on European science, it suffices to enumerate the Arabic words used in various scientific disciplines: in mathematics, in addition to algebra there is algorithm and the number or the zero, and in chemistry: alembic alcohol or amalgam, and in medicine: lacquer and syrup or soda, and in astronomy: azimuth and zenith or nadir.

In the 18th century, Voltaire dared to say with his usual frankness: "During the centuries of barbarism and ignorance that we lived after the decadence and tearing apart of the Roman Empire, we almost got all from the Arabs: astronomy, chemistry and medicine."¹ As for his contemporary Gibbon, he goes even further, since he attributed to the Arab- Muslim civilization alone the transfer of ancient knowledge to the West².

Closer to us, Gustave Le Bon writes in *The Civilization of the Arabs*: "The influence of the East on Western civilization was very much due to the Crusades, but the influence was more artistic, industrial, and commercial than scientific and literary. When we look at the tremendous development of trade relations and the importance of the artistic and industrial progress arising from the contact of the

¹ *Préface de l'Es* *Préface de l'Essai sur l'Histoire universelle* (1754), dans Œuvres complètes de Voltaire, Voltaire, éditions Moland, 1875, tome 24, p. 49. *sai sur l'Histoire universelle* (1754), dans Œuvres complètes de Voltaire, Voltaire, éditions Moland, 1875, tome 24, p. 49.

² *La civilisation byzantine*, Bernard Flusin, PUF 2006.

Crusaders with the East, we can assert that the Easterners were the ones who brought the West out of barbarism and prepared this movement of minds that the scientific and literary influence of the Arabs, propagated by the universities of Europe, would soon develop and from which the renaissance would one day emerge."¹

Gustave Le Bon concludes his work on Arab civilization with a summary of the latter's contributions to Humanity: "In terms of civilization, few peoples have surpassed the Arabs, and we cannot name anyone who has made such great progress in such a short time. From the religious point of view, they came up with one of the most powerful religions that ruled the world, one of the most influential and vibrant. Politically, they established one of the greatest empires in history. Intellectually and morally, they civilized Europe."²

Gustave Le Bon explains why some historians have downplayed the contribution made by Muslim civilization to Europe: "It will always seem humiliating to some minds to think that full credit goes for some infidels to have brought Christian Europe out of barbarism, and something so humiliating on the surface will only be accepted with difficulty."³

Elisée Reclus (1830-1905), a French writer, saw this as a sign of bad faith on the part of these historians: "The Arabs of the Guadalquivir were the masters and educators of Europe in astronomy, mathematics, mechanics, medicine, philosophy, etc. Only ingratitude and bad faith could deny them this merit."⁴

¹ *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, éditions La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Nouvelle géographie universelle*, Reclus, éditions Hachette, 1876, vol. 1, p. 906.

Chapter 2

The progression of Islam today

1- The fastest spreading religion

In the late 19th century, Gustave Le Bon described the unstoppable progression of Islam in these terms: "What is striking is the astonishing ease with which the Koran has spread throughout the world. Wherever a Muslim goes, it is certain that his religion will remain after him. In countries that the Arabs never visited as conquerors, and which were only visited by their merchants, such as parts of China, Central Africa and Russia, there are now millions of followers of the Prophet. All these conversions took place freely and without violence; we have never heard that the matter required sending armies to give a helping hand to these simple Arab merchants acting as missionaries. Wherever they come, they establish their religion, and it soon expands. It has settled in Russia for centuries and has never been uprooted from it, and there are currently 50 million Muslims in India¹ where all the efforts of the Protestant missionaries, as well as the valuable help provided by the local administration, failed to bring about conversions. It is not known how many there may be in Africa, but as far as modern explorers have entered Africa², they have found tribes that embrace Islam, a religion that is currently civilizing the peoples of Africa to the extent that they can be civilized, and making its beneficial action felt everywhere. "Thanks to it," rightly writes M. J. Duval, fetishes and idols disappeared from the earth, human sacrifice and

¹ There are nearly 200 million people in the country today and, according to a report by the Pew Research Center, there will be 300 million by 2050.

² There are now about 500 million of them on the African continent.

anthropophagy were abolished, and women's rights enshrined, although in a much lesser way than absolute law, polygamy was regulated and restricted, family ties were confirmed and consolidated, and slaves became part of the family and to whom easy and numerous exits towards freedom are opened. Prayer, almsgiving and hospitality purify and elevate public morals. A sense of fairness and benevolence seeps into conscience. The masters of the peoples learn that they have duties just like their subjects. Society is established on regular basis. And if, in many cases, certain abuses have gone unpunished, as is the case everywhere else, then divine justice is very vigilant and observes the deeds of each person: there is the hope of a better future life where the victim will enjoy a happiness that will compensate for what he or she missed out on and the injustice he or she was the victim of. These are some of the benefits that indicate the spread of Islam in uncivilized societies everywhere."¹

The spread of Islam that the French sociologist described here has never faltered since then, to the point that even today, the Muslim religion is the fastest spreading and expanding in the world, whether through the birth rate or conversions.

Gérard-François Dumont, professor at the Sorbonne and president of the review *Population et Avenir*, writes: "The first phenomenon comes from the demographic rise of Islam, in absolute and relative terms." In the 1930s, the percentage of Christians who represent then about one third of the world's population, is more than three times that of the Muslims who make up one-tenth of the world's population. The weight of Catholics alone, a clear half of Christianity, was then one third greater than that of Muslims. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the spread of the demographic transition, the gap has narrowed

¹ *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

considerably: Islam accounts for one-fifth of the world's population and Christianity for less than one-third. As for Catholics, who still make up the larger half of Christians, they are fewer in number than Muslims, must now be compared with the largest group of Muslims, the Sunnis, to have similar numbers."¹

In fact, the Vatican officially recognized in March 2008 that Islam has become the first religion in the world, with Muslims making up 19 percent compared to 17.5 percent of Catholics. "For the first time in history, we are no longer in the lead: Muslims have overtaken us," said Bishop Vittorio Formenti, author of the 2008 Pontifical National Statistical Yearbook.

2- Projections

In the world

Gérard-François Dumont believes that a brighter future awaits the Muslim religion on a global scale and that: "it is expected that the pace of this decrease in the relative weight of Christians in the world and the increase in the percentage of Muslims should continue during the first half of the twenty-first century. Islam could become the first religion in terms of the number of people practicing it, or even in terms of the number of people who consider it a reference."²

Furthermore, according to a study by the famous Pew Research Center published in 2017, the world's population is expected to grow by 35% to reach 9.3 billion by 2050. During the same period, Muslims are expected to grow at a rate of 73 percent, twice the global average. The number of Christians is also expected to increase, albeit at a slower rate, and by roughly the same percentage (35%) of the total population. As a result, according to Pew

¹ *Analyse stratégique et enjeux géodémographiques du XXI^e siècle*, in Agir, revue générale de stratégie, 2010, p. 97-110.

² *Ibidem*.

Research Center projections, by 2050 there will be almost parity between the number of Muslims, 2.8 billion, or 30% of the world's population, and Christians, 2.9 billion, or 31%

According to Conrad Hackett, of the Pew Research Center, Islam is indeed the religion with the youngest average age of followers and therefore has the strongest prospects for development over the next 45 years

If this growth rate continues, it means that by 2070 Muslims will outnumber Christians, Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox, according to a report from the Pew Research.

In Europe

According to an average estimate, the European Union's 28 countries - plus Switzerland and Norway, which had 4.9% of Muslims in 2016 - will have 11.2% in 2050. The number of Muslims should then be approximately 60 million, equivalent to the current population of France.

In France

Still, according to the average scenario, Muslims should make up 17.4% of France's population in 2050, or 12.6 million Muslims in that country, compared to 5.7 million in 2016

As we can see, the spread of Islam since its birth is unstoppable and is expected to continue to make it the first world religion during the 21st century, ahead of Christianity with all its tendencies together.

3- The universality of Islam

As we have discussed, Islam is not the religion of a people like Judaism, nor that of a man like Christianity, nor of a region like Hinduism, but rather a state of spirit in which men and women

surrender to the will of their Lord, which makes it a universal religion.

Goethe quite rightly writes on this subject: "It is foolishness that each in his own case express his personal opinion! If Islam means: subject to God, we all live and die in Islam."¹

Thomas Carlyle confirms these verses of the German poet when he declares in his book on heroes of History, that the message of Islam is universal: man must submit to God, such is the essence of Islam, as it is the essence of true Christianity². In other words, unlike Islam which has remained true to its essence, submission to God, Christianity has deviated from it.

Islam is the only religion, along with Christianity, that is found in all continents and races, which is another proof of its authenticity. For it is inconceivable that God would reserve His religion, the one that is supposed to bring salvation to mankind, for one race or one region of the globe. True religion cannot but be universal.

Henry de Castries already described, at the beginning of the 20th century, this universality of Islam: "Islam is certainly a universal, "international" religion, since it is today the religion of very different races": Semites, Aryans, Tartars, Malays, Negroes."³

Gérard-François Dumont confirms this phenomenon of the globalization of Islam: "These changes in the proportion of religions in the world are coupled with a new religious geography and, more precisely, a new geography of Islam: "For a long time, the cartography of the religious distribution in the world confined this religion in an almost continuous geographical set going, on the one

¹ *Divan Occidental-oriental*, Goethe, tradition: Henri Lichtenberger, 1930, p. 163.

² *On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, Thomas Carlyle, Hachette, 1925, traduit de l'anglais.

³ *L'Islam : impressions et études*, A. Colin, Paris, 1907, p. 190.

hand, from Morocco to Pakistan, adding Bangladesh, on the other hand, from India, Indonesia and Malaysia in part, and, on the other hand, from the northern half of Africa up to certain Balkan populations and Chinese Xinjiang. In the 21st century, this cartographic representation is outdated. Islam, backed by emigration flows from predominantly Muslim countries, is growing in Europe, North America and now even in Japan. This last example of a country that remained isolated from international migration for a long time shows that there is an unprecedented historical phenomenon, a process of globalization of Islam."¹

Chapter 3

The multiplication of conversions

1- Figures

In the world

According to Gérard-François Dumont, "the real novelty of the Pew Research Center's report is that it provides a way to measure possible conversions. The report calculates in fact predictions of conversions: changes in religion, leaving a religion to become without religion, or people without religion joining a religion. The model used by the report concludes that the largest conversion flows by 2050 would involve Christianity and people with no religion. As a result of conversions alone, Christianity is expected to

¹ *Analyse stratégique et enjeux géodémographique du XXI^e siècle*, Agir, revue générale de stratégie, 2010, p. 97-110.

witness a decline of 66 million people, corresponding to a group of 106 million people who would leave the Christian faith and 40 million who would profess it, while 61.5 million people would choose to remain without a religion. Among the other religions losing or gaining some followers, the figures are much lower; Buddhism would be affected by a net loss of 2.85 million; Islam, on the other hand, would gain 3.2 million, which is the difference between people of non-Muslim origin becoming Muslims, i.e. 12.6 million, and Muslims leaving Islam, i.e. 9.4 million."¹

So, by 2050, Islam will be the only world religion making progress through conversions.

In France

According to INED and INSEE, between 70,000 and 110,000 people have converted to Islam in France, a huge figure given the prevailing anti-Islamic climate and the media campaign launched against it. According to what was reported by the Religious Affairs Office of the Ministry of the Interior, there are 4,000 people converting to Islam every year in France, that is, more than ten conversions a day.

In the United States

According to the Pew Research Center, in 2017, converts would make up 21 percent of the 3.3 million American Muslims or about 600,000 people. Among them, 64% are African Americans, 22% White, and 12% Hispanic.

In the United Kingdom

In a study conducted in 2011 by Faith Matters, a British

¹ Interview of Gérard-François Dumont with the Atlantico site (published on April 6, 2015).

organization working in the field of interreligious dialogue, the number of British who converted to Islam was estimated at 100,000, a figure very close to that of France for a similar population.

In Germany

According to the German newspaper Der Spiegel, about 4.000 citizens converted to Islam in Germany between July 2004 and June 2005, a figure also very close to that of France.

Conversions to Islam have broken out in Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, South Korea and Australia. ...

2- The diversity of conversions

As can be seen, the effects of the conversions are being felt across all continents. They also concern all races and all social categories: intellectuals, scientists, artists or sportsmen.

The Jews

Despite the often-strained relationships between Islam and Judaism, many Jews throughout history have converted to Islam. Here are some examples.

- Sabbataï Tsevi

As we have seen, when the expected Messiah came in the person of Jesus, many Hebrews did not believe in him. The Jewish people have been waiting for millennia for the coming of the Messiah, a descendent of David, who was supposed to lead the people of Israel to victory. A number of Jews who truly believed in or pretended to be the Messiah have appeared throughout history, especially in times of oppression and pogroms. The most influential and most famous of them was undoubtedly Sabbataï Tsevi, who was born in 1626 in Smyrna in present-day Turkey and died in 1676 in Dulcigno, a town in present-day Montenegro. In 1648 Sabatai Tsevi proclaimed

himself the Messiah, at the age of 22 years, which caused a deep schism within Judaism, between many who recognized him as Messiah and others who considered him as an impostor. It was precisely in 1648 that tens of thousands of Jews were exterminated in Russia and Poland by the ataman Bogdan Chmielnicki during the Cossack revolt against the Polish rule. Moreover, the expulsion of Jews from Spain from 1492 onwards was a traumatic experience for them. In addition to these external causes, there were also internal ones, such as the growing Jewish mysticism of the time.

After the Jewish authorities prevented him from entering Smyrna, the false Messiah traveled to Constantinople, then to Salonika, then to Cairo, and then to Jerusalem. In 1665, religious exaltation reached its zenith among the Jews. Sabbatai Tsevi was welcomed as the Messiah by the Jews of Aleppo, then by those of Smyrna, his birthplace. Many communities in Eastern Europe, Western Europe and the Middle East recognize him as the Messiah of the Jews, whose mission is to bring them back to the Holy Land and to revive the kingdom of Israel. Whole communities prepared to leave after selling everything they owned. In 1666, Sabbatai Tsevi returned to Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Leaders of the local Jewish community denounced him to the authorities as a troublemaker and he was summoned to the palace where he was put in prison. The enthusiasm of his followers did not wane, and Sabbatai Tsevi was summoned by the Ottoman authorities who ordered him to perform, if he wanted to escape death, a miracle to prove that he was the Messiah or, if not, to convert to Islam, which he finally did. The shock of the announcement of Sabbatai Tsevi's conversion to Islam was enormous and the disappointment could only be matched by the great hope he raised.

Commenting on the shock of this unprecedented messianic movement, Bernard Dupuy, a French Dominican priest, wrote: "The messianic movement that emerged in the seventeenth century

around the name Sabbatai Tsevi is the most important that Judaism has known since the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and the revolt of Bar Kokhba. Moreover, it is practically the only movement that really had a universal resonance, since an event of such magnitude is bound to have a profound impact on the idea of Judaism's perception regarding the coming of the Messiah. The resulting shaking of the Jewish people was felt in all communities. It shook all social strata of the Jewish population."¹In addition, these events led to a massive conversion of Jews to Islam.

- Muhammad Asad

Muhammad Asad, born Leopold Weiss, is an Austro-Hungarian Jew from an Orthodox background - his paternal grandfather was a rabbi - who, after his conversion to Islam, exerted a great influence on the Muslim world through his political engagement and his writings. He received a religious education, studied Hebrew, Torah and Talmud. It is during this time that his faith in Judaism began to wane, which he explains as follows: "It seemed to me that the God of the Bible was overly and unduly preoccupied with the rituals his believers were supposed to observe and with the fate of one nation: the Hebrew nation." Being a polyglot, Assad speaks Polish, Yiddish, German, Arabic, Persian, English and French. He began his career as a journalist at the then leading German-language daily *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

It is in 1922 that the major turning point occurred in his life. That year, his uncle, who lives in Jerusalem, invited him to visit Palestine. So, he joined him and spent a few months there. In the same year, Léopold Weiss began a long journey during which he visited a number of Muslim countries, including Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Persia and Arabia. The Arab world welcomed him with warm hospitality

¹ *Encyclopædia Universalis*, « Sabbatai Tsevi », Bernard Dupuy.

and he admired its unity of "elective affinities", the ummah which seemed ideal to him. Fascinated by the Muslim world, he wrote: "It seemed to me that for the first time I found myself in the midst of a community in which the bonds between people are not based on common ethnic or economic foundations, but on something more stable. They stem from the same principles that removed all barriers of isolation between people."¹ Having felt drawn to the spiritual purity of Islam and its ability to create a strong sense of community, far from European materialism and individualism, Assad converted to Islam at the age of twenty-six during his stay in Berlin.

Often compared to Lawrence of Arabia, he was a close advisor to the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, King Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Saud, a guest of King Abdullah of Transjordan in his palace and a friend of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. In 1947, he participated, with the philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, in the creation of Pakistan, of which he became the first ambassador to the UN in 1952. After leaving the diplomatic world, he wrote his autobiography *The Road to Makkah* in 1954. He then lived in Tangier for about twenty years where he worked on the translation of the Koran, before moving to Granada, Spain until his death in 1992.

We can also mention Maryam Jameelah, born Margaret Marcus, an American Jew, author of more than thirty books on the culture and history of Islam, and converted to Islam in 1961 before emigrating to Pakistan, or Wolf Michel, an American poet and writer with a Jewish father. He converted to Islam at the age of forty, along with many other unknown Jews who have always crossed the Rubicon to convert to Islam.

Orientalists and Islamologists

No one knows the truth of the Islamic religion better than the

¹ *Un Proche-Orient sans romantisme : Journal de voyage*, Léopold Weiss, CNRS, 2005.

Islamologists. Thus, some of them knowingly embraced the religion they had studied so much.

- Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch

Born in 1909, Eva de Vitry Mirowicz holds a doctorate in islamology. She is a researcher at the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) as well as a translator and writer in a bourgeois district in Paris. She joined Catholic institutions. As a brilliant student, she studied law, which at that time was rare for a woman. First in her class, she chose to study philosophy. At the age of 22, she married Lazare Meyerovitch, of Latvian Jewish origin. She became an administrator at the laboratory of Frédéric Joliot-Curie, with whom she escaped from Paris in 1940 during the German occupation. After the Liberation, she joined the CNRS where she quickly became director of the "Human Sciences" department.

She discovered Islam through the book by the Pakistani thinker and poet Muhammad Iqbal: *Reconstructing the Religious Thought of Islam*. Before committing herself to Islam, she decided, for the sake of intellectual honesty, to take three years of Christian exegesis courses at the Sorbonne, notably with Oscar Culmann, a renowned Lutheran theologian. It is in 1960 that she pronounced the Shahada. She explained her journey to Islam as follows: "Islam is the common denominator of all religions. One does not convert to Islam. One embraces a religion that contains all the others."¹

From 1969 to 1973, she was seconded to Cairo as a teacher at Al-Azhar University. In 1971, she made the pilgrimage to Makkah and also visited Madinah. She has published about forty books. She said: "I tried to make known what I believe to be the true face of Islam. The tenets of Islam call for love, tenderness and universalism. To be a Muslim or to be a Muslim woman means to surrender in peace

¹ *D'une foi à l'autre : les conversions à l'islam en Occident*, Cherqaoui, Seuil, 1986, p. 20.

to an Absolute, while rejecting the independence of what is relative in relation to this Absolute."¹

We could also have cited Michel Chodkiewicz, director general, then president and director general of the Seuil publishing house from 1977 to 1989 and director of studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (School of Higher Studies in Social Sciences), who himself explains his conversion to Islam at the age of seventeen as the "outcome of a personal search begun as a teenager" or Eric Geoffroy, professor of islamology at the University of Strasbourg, Vincent Monteil, French orientalist, or Romain Caillet, islamologist, recognized specialist of the world jihadist movement, in particular of the Islamic State and Al Qaeda, converted to Islam in 1997 at the age of 20.

Philosophers

- René Guénon

The philosopher René Guénon, whose name became Abd Al-Wahid Yahya after his conversion to Islam, was born in Blois in 1886 into a very Catholic family from Angers. His books oppose the civilizations that have remained faithful to the "traditional spirit," which he says "has an authentic representative only in the East," to the entire modern civilization, which is considered deviant. He was, in the 1920s, a prominent figure in Parisian intellectual circles. His thought has deeply influenced authors of various stripes such as Mircea Eliade, Antonin Artaud, Raymond Queneau, Simone Weil and even André Breton.

Guénon faced severe criticism because of his book *La crise du monde moderne* (*The Modern World Crisis*), which is an indictment against the modern world published in 1927. Realizing that he cannot obtain spiritual healing in the West, Guénon leaves in 1930

¹ *Les nouveaux convertis*, Pierre Assouline, Folio, 1992.

for Egypt where he was to stay only three months before finally dying. He lives in relative poverty in the Cairo's old traditional quarter where he wrote: "I am more 'at home' here than in Europe." He blends into the Muslim world. Dressed in traditional costume, he quickly learned to speak the Arabic dialect and received his Egyptian naturalization in 1949.

His death in 1951 in Cairo was a tragedy and a media shock that most French newspapers reported on. His major books were translated into all European languages and, since his death, the influence of his thought has been steadily increasing. Guénon is introduced by Antoine Compagnon in his preface of *Guénon ou le renversement des clartés* (Guénon or the Reversal of the Clarities) by Xavier Accart as "the thinker of Tradition and certainly one of the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century".

Many European intellectuals and philosophers influenced by Guénon converted to Islam, such as the Swiss thinkers Frithjof Schuon, Titus Burckhardt and the French journalist Michel Vâlsan or the English writer Martin Lings.

The writers

We can also mention Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1875-1936), the British writer known for his English translation of the Koran, or Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb (1846-1916), the American writer who was considered the first to convert to Islam in his country.

Journalists

- Roger du Pasquier

Born in 1917, with a degree in history and geography, Roger du Pasquier is a Swiss journalist and a translator who was brought up in a Protestant family. Having carried out reports in the East in the 1940s, he became close to the orientalist Jean Herbert (1897-1980)

who also shows in his work a deep interest in oriental traditions and spiritualities. Influenced by René Guénon's conversion to Islam, he himself converted to this religion.

Roger de Pasquier has translated many books, including *The Road to Makkah* by the Austrian who converted to Islam, Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss) and published many works devoted to Islam such as *Islam Between Tradition and Revolution* or *the Discovery of Islam* (1984), in which he wrote in particular: "It seems that nothing on the face of the earth is escaping the crisis that is shaking the modern world. It is no longer enough to talk about the crisis of civilization, as the phenomenon has taken cosmic dimensions. Its dark aspects are becoming more and more clear and anxiety is spreading.

Now, Islam was given to men precisely to help them get through this ultimate phase of universal history without getting lost. As the last revelation of the prophetic cycle, it offers the means to resist the current chaos, to restore order and clarity within oneself as well as harmony in human relationships, and to realize the supreme destiny to which the Creator has invited us."

We could also quote Lauren Booth, English journalist, best known for being the sister-in-law of the former English Prime Minister Tony Blair, but also Yvonne Ridley, British journalist kidnapped then released by the Taliban in 2001, who converted to Islam in 2003. Let us also mention Kristianne Backer, a German journalist, Sarah Joseph, an English journalist, converted to Islam at the age of 16 after having been brought up in Catholicism, or Myriam François-Cerrah, a French-English academic and journalist, converted at the age of 21 when she had just graduated from Cambridge University.

The scientists

Among the scientists converted to Islam one can mention Bruno

Guiderdoni, astrophysicist, specialist in the formation and evolution of galaxies, director of the Lyon observatory, or Jeffrey Lang, American mathematician born in 1954 into a very Catholic family, converted in the early 1980s and author of books on Islam, including the bestseller *Even Angels ask: a journey to Islam in America*.

Politicians

- Philippe Grenier

Philippe Grenier, who converted to Islam in 1894, became the first Muslim deputy in the history of France and sat in the National Assembly as deputy of the Doubs from 1896 to 1898.

On December 30, 1896, after his victory, he explained his faith in front of several reporters who asked him questions. "You want to know why I became a Muslim? By taste, inclination, and faith, and not at all by fancy, as some have hinted. From a young age, Islam and its doctrine have had an almost irreversible appeal on me [...] but it was only after a careful reading of the Koran, followed by in-depth studies and long meditations, that I embraced the Muslim religion. I accepted this faith, this dogma, because it seemed to me to be just as rational and in any case more in conformity with science than Catholic faith and dogma. I would add that the commandments of Muslim law are excellent because, from the social point of view, Arab society is totally dependent on the family organization and the principles of equity, justice and kindness to the unfortunate are at the heart of this religion. In matters of hygiene - which is particularly important for the doctor - drinking alcoholic beverages is forbidden and it is ordered to do frequent ablution at every prayer and to clean one's body and clothes."

We could also have mentioned Henry Edward John Stanley (1827-1903), 3rd Baron Stanley of Alderley, a pioneer figure in British Islam and the first Muslim member of the House of Lords.

In the next chapter, we will also touch on the even more surprising case of some extreme right-wing politicians who were initially Islamophobic but who have nevertheless become Muslims.

Diplomats

Many are the diplomats who converted to Islam, such as the British Abdullah Quilliam (1856-1932), who was considered the first Englishman to convert to Islam, the British St. John Phil (1885-1960) and the German Murad Wilfred Hofmann, ambassador to Algeria from 1987 to 1990, and to Morocco from 1990 to 1994, Knut Bernstroem, former Swedish ambassador to Morocco and author of the Swedish translation of the Koran, Simon Collis, UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia or Torquato Cardilli, ambassador of the very Catholic Italy in Riyadh.

The artists

Many artists, mainly singers, some at the height of their fame, have declared their conversion to Islam, as is the case of Cat Stevens (1977) or, more recently, of Sinéad O'Connor. There is also the French painter Etienne Dinet (1861-1929).

Sportsmen and women

Many athletes have converted to Islam, such as Pierre Vogel, the former German boxer who has become a leading Muslim preacher for his country, or Tarek Abdel Wahid (Olivier Saint-Jean), the first French player to join the NBA in 1997.

It should be noted that many converts are intellectuals who, for professional reasons, have studied the Muslim world and Islam. This is the case of Islamologists and philosophers. Others, like journalists and diplomats, have discovered and understood Islam through contact with Muslims. Moreover, conversion is usually achieved through one or both of these channels: the study of Islam and the

encounter with Muslims.

3- Unexpected conversions

Islamophobes who became Muslims

Politicians, members of openly Islamophobic parties, surprised the world by announcing their conversion to Islam. Among them, Daniel Streich, a former member of the Swiss People's Union, who campaigned in 2009 for a ban on building new minarets. Although he converted to Islam in 2005, he did not announce it until 2009, after his resignation from his political party to protest against this campaign, explaining his choice that Islam brought him "logical answers to the important questions of life".

Another politician who has made headlines for his unthinkable conversion to Islam is Joram van Klaveren, a former member of the Dutch Islamophobic PVV party, led by Geert Wilders. Joram van Klaveren converted to Islam in 2018 after studying this religion with the intention of writing a book that severely criticizes it. He claims to have had an epiphany while working on the book, which was initially intended to expose all the threats that Islam would pose to European societies. His book, now entitled *Apostate From Christianity to Islam in times of secularisation and terror* has been transformed into "a refutation of the objections non-Muslims have to Islam," he states.

Already in 2013, Arnoud van Doorn, another PVV elected representative and producer of the anti-Islamic film "fitna", created a surprise by announcing his conversion to Islam. "There were so many negative stories about Islam that I felt the need to do my own research and find out what was true and what wasn't," he explained at the time.

Other examples of Islamophobic converts to Islam are the Germans Arthur Wagner, a member of the AfD, a party known for

its Islamophobic stance, and Werner Klawun, a German MP from the far-right National Democratic Party (NDP) who, at the age of 75, announced that he had converted to Islam. Werner Klawun explained that after reading the Eastern Divan and the poems of the great German poet Goethe praising the prophet of Islam, he wanted to know more about Islam and that after reading the Koran in German, he decided to convert

Also worth mentioning is the case of Frenchman Maxence Buttey, a former city councilor in the far-right National Front party, from which he was expelled in 2015 for proselytizing.

Head of anti-terrorism and converted to Islam

On October 3, 2012, the newspaper *Courrier international* published an article entitled *Roger, 60 years old, chief at CIA and...converted to Islam*, from which we reproduce extracts here:

"As head of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center (CTC) for the past six years, the man is nothing less than the gravedigger of Al Qaeda. Operating under the assumed name of Roger, he is both the most important and the least visible of Washington's security officials. The main architect of the CIA's drone offensive, he took the lead in the search for Osama bin Laden, and is credited in many ways with making targeted assassinations a cornerstone of the Obama administration's counterterrorism policy [...] He is the one who conducted a campaign of air strikes that resulted in the murder of thousands of Islamists and the wrath of millions of Muslims and yet he himself has converted to Islam [...] In his time as head of counterterrorism, Roger has worked with two presidents, four CIA directors and four directors of national intelligence. At the highest level of national security, Robert Mueller, who was appointed FBI director shortly before 9/11 and is still in office, is the only one who has stayed on longer."

Feminists and Muslims

We have already mentioned the feminists Dominique Thewissen, professor of Islamic religion and Susan Janet Carland, Australian academic and television host, both feminists and converts to Islam. Another case is that of Leda Rafanelli (1880-1971), an Italian woman of letters, who was also an anarchist activist, a feminist, but also a ... Muslim convert.

Priests defrocked for Islam

Many clergymen, such as the former American Protestant minister George Baker (1849-1918) and the French Catholic priest Jean-Marie Duchemin (1908-1988), renounced their religion in favor of Islam. The latter converted after discovering "the transformation that successive generations have made of the Bible" and "the influence of the Roman and Byzantine emperors on the evolution of the Christian faith". Researchers have long been interested in the conversions of Westerners from Islam, trying to explain a phenomenon that hardly comes to mind in societies that have always denounced this religion and downgraded its value. Many explanations, mostly sociological, have been put forward, but few have highlighted the fundamental role of religious practices and the fervor of Muslims. Similarly, Luther, the great Protestant reformer, explained the attraction that Islam already had for people by the religious practices and zeal of Muslims: "The religion of the Turks or Muslims is much more wonderful in its ceremonies than ours, even considering the religion and all the clergy. The frugal simplicity of dress, food, lodging, and everything else, and the frequent fasts, prayers, and gatherings of the faithful, are nowhere to be found among us [...] Ours are but shadows in comparison, and our people are clearly profane next to theirs. Even the true Christians, even Christ, even the apostles and prophets never displayed such pomp. That is why so many people willingly give up their faith in Christ for

the faith in Muhammad and cling to it with such stubbornness. I sincerely believe that no papist, no monk, no cleric, nor any of their equals in faith would be able to keep his religion if he had to spend three days with the Turks."¹

4- An answer to the detractors of Islam

The large number, types and variety of people embracing Islam are the best response to the attack on that religion today. Let us judge that.

1. *Islam, a false religion?*

The number of cases of conversion to Islam belies this slander and refutes it, especially since it is the subject of many criticisms.

Therefore, crossing the Rubicon to convert to Islam today requires great faith in its veracity and authenticity. Better, it seems that, the more Islam is attacked, the more the number of conversions increases.

2. *Is it true that Islam does not respect women's rights?*

Yet, as we have seen, studies show that 75% of converts are female. Some of these converts are even feminists.

3. *Islam, a religion of terrorists?*

If so, what about the conversion to Islam of the head of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center? In France, the one who is considered to be the greatest specialist in jihadist groups, Romain Caillet, is also a convert.

4. *Is Islam a religion of hatred?*

Again, another prejudice shattered by the large number of

¹ *Vorwort zum dem Libellus de ritu et Moribus*, dans *Werke*, vol. 30/2, p. 206.

Christian priests, known for their charity, who converted to Islam, such as George Baker or Jean-Marie Duchemin.

5. Did Islam spread under the shadow of the sword?

The phenomenon of conversions, particularly in Europe and America, proves by itself that the spread of Islam does not require force.

6. Is Islam the religion of the Arabs?

The converts, from all races, prove the opposite.

7. Is Islam anti-Semitic?

We have painted portraits of Jewish converts. Today, Israeli authorities are sounding the alarm over the increasing conversion of Israeli Jews to Islam.

8. Is Islam a liberticidal religion?

We have mentioned freedom-loving converts, like anarchist Leda Rafanelli. Islam frees men from any submission other than that to the Lord, so it is indeed a liberating religion.

9. Is Islam a reactionary and obscurantist religion?

We have seen that many intellectuals and artists have adopted Islam. In fact, many Westerners have not condemned progress, but rather the materialism rooted in their society, which led them to embrace Islam because of the spirituality they found in it and not in other religions.

10. Is Islam, like other religions, opposed to science?

We mentioned several scientists who have converted to Islam. We have also shown that many atheists and Christians embraced Islam after reading Maurice Boucaille's book, *The Koran, the Bible and Science*

or, more generally, after being impressed by the scientific truth of the Koran, as in the case of former National Front leader Maxence Buttey.



Part Five

The characteristics of a prophet

Introduction

While Muhammad was long considered an impostor by Western authors, the prevailing opinion among scholars today is that he was sincere in his preaching, even if this does not make him a true prophet. Marmaduke Pickthall summarizes the prevailing opinion among islamologists scholars about Muhammad in the preface to his English translation of the Koran: "I am not opposed to the beauty of his philosophy, his practical ethics and his high morality. I am willing to concede that Muhammad was a very sincere man who offered humanity, for its welfare, some very wonderful precepts. However, what I cannot concede is that you Muslims claim that his message was revealed to him by a supernatural authority"¹

This is a position that cannot, in fact, be defended, for he who claims, as we shall see, to be a prophet, is either sincere in what he claims, or an impostor of the first order, utterly evil and contemptible. There is no middle way.

Others, rarer in number, have recognized in him a true prophet, a confession that has led some of them to convert to Islam. Annie Besant did not convert even though she considers Muhammad to be a true prophet. "It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme," wrote this British feminist who fought for India's independence² in the early 20th century. Our purpose in this last section is to show

¹ *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran: An Explanatory Translation*, Pickthall, 1930.

² *The life and the teachings of Muhammad*, Madras, 1930, p. 4.

that Muhammad was not only sincere in his faith, but that he was a true messenger of the Semitic prophetic lineage. Indeed, none of the reasons that could lead a man to declare himself a false prophet can be found in Muhammad who, on the contrary, possessed all the characteristics and qualities of a true envoy of God.

Chapter 1

Anything but a false prophet

1- The Bible describes false prophets

Muhammad's detractors often say that he is an impostor. Yet the Koran, the book that opponents of Islam attribute to him, describes false prophets as the most despicable of people: "Who does more wrong than the one who fabricates lies against Allah or claims, "I have received revelations!"—although nothing was revealed to them—or the one who says, "I can reveal the like of Allah's revelations!"¹ Some Muslim scholars point out that anyone who claims to be a prophet is either a sincere man or the most wicked man on earth. Only an evil person can falsely claim that he is sent by God and that he speaks in His name. Only an evil being dares to lie about God. Even those orientalist who are the least sympathetic to the Prophet, believe that this description does not correspond to Muhammad, to whom they now attribute great moral qualities, beginning with sincerity.

¹ Koran 6, 93.

Several biblical passages describe false prophets, such as the following: "And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."¹

The first criterion for distinguishing a false prophet from a true prophet is that the prophecies of the former are not fulfilled. In the second part of this book, we saw that, so far, all of Muhammad's prophecies have been fulfilled.

Yet, another passage indicates that a false prophet can see his predictions come true. With this, God tests men. So, how can we tell the difference between a true prophet and a false one? By the content of his message: if he preaches pure monotheism, he is sent by God, and if he calls to worship someone other than God, then he is a false prophet. Nevertheless, we have now shown how the unicity of God is at the heart of the Koran's message, as the English historian Edward Gibbon acknowledges: "The creed of Mahomet is free from suspicion or ambiguity; and the Koran is a glorious testimony to the unity of God. The prophet of Makkah rejected the worship of idols and men, of stars and planets, on the rational principle that whatever rises must set, that whatever is born must die, that whatever is corruptible must decay and perish. In the Author of the universe, his rational enthusiasm confessed and adored an infinite and eternal being."²

Here is the biblical passage in question: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake

¹ Deuteronomy 18, 21-22.

² *Histoire du déclin et de la chute de l'Empire romain*, Gibbon, Robert Laffont, 1983, p. 487.

unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn *you* away from the LORD."¹

The end of this passage brings an important clarification: God will order the death of any false prophet. However, Muhammad's mission lasted twenty-three years and led to the triumph of Islamic monotheism. Recall what Napoleon said on this subject: "Muhammad was a prince who gathered his compatriots around him. In a few years, his Muslims conquered half the world. They snatched more souls from false gods, brought down more idols and overturned more pagan temples in fifteen years than the disciples of Moses and Jesus Christ had done in fifteen centuries. Muhammad was a great man".²

The fate of some false prophets

1. Hanania.

The Old Testament narrates the fate of Hananiah, a false Jewish prophet: "Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh

¹ *Deuteronomy 13, 1-5.*

² *Bonaparte et l'Islam*, Christian Cherfils, Alcazar publishing, 2016, p. 94.

month."¹

2. Mani.

Mani was born in AD 216 in Babylon. He claimed to be a new prophet and successor to Buddha, Zoroaster and Jesus, and created one of the most important religions in the ancient world. According to Manichean theology, the world of light and the world of darkness collide with each other. In the year 277, King Vahram gave the order to chain Mani, who died after spending several days. His religion gradually sank into oblivion.

3. Musaylima.

Towards the end of Muhammad's life, Musaylima, chief of an Arab tribe in the east of the Arabian Peninsula, pretended to be a prophet and even to have been entrusted with his mission by Gabriel. He confirmed that Suras had been revealed to him, just as the Koran had been revealed to Muhammad. However, less than two years after the Prophet's death, Musaylima was fought and killed by Muslims at the time of the first Caliph Abu Bakr in 634.

4. Joseph Smith (1805-1844).

This American is the founder of Mormonism. In 1830 he published the *Book of Mormon* which he said was the translation of an ancient story inscribed on gold plates, entrusted to him by an angel. That same year, he founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Many new believers regarded him as a prophet of God. He was finally murdered at the age of 38 by a mob opposed to the Mormons.

The false prophets of the Old Testament have loose morals, gave themselves over to wine (Isaiah 28:7), prophesied for money and for

¹ *Jeremiah 28:15-17.*

ingratiating themselves with men (Micah 3:11). Therefore, they had nothing in common with the Prophet of Islam who, as we will show, possessed high moral qualities, even according to the most complacent non-Muslims and sometimes even his most bitter opponents.

The Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), in his work dedicated to the heroes of history, rejects the idea that the Prophet was an impostor moved only by the desire to make profit: "Forger and juggler? No, no! This great fiery heart, seething, simmering like a great furnace of thoughts, was not a juggler's... But for a wretched Simulacrum, a hungry Impostor without eyes or heart, practicing for a mess of pottage such blasphemous swindlery, forgery of celestial documents, continual high-treason against his Maker and Self, we will not and cannot take him."¹

Alphonse de Lamartine expresses an opinion quite similar to this one: "Was this man an impostor? We do not think so, after having thoroughly studied his history. Imposture is the hypocrisy of conviction. Hypocrisy does not have the power of conviction, just as lies never have the power of truth."²

Auguste Le Bon confirms the point of view of these two writers: "As for claiming that Muhammad was an impostor, it seems obvious to me that such an assertion cannot stand for a moment."³

¹ *On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, Carlyle, Hachette, 1925.

² *Histoire de la Turquie*, Lamartine, Librairie du constitutionnel, Paris, 1854, tome 1, p. 279.

³ *La Civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

2- Reasons that can prompt someone to pretend to be a prophet

Firstly: power and glory

The first reason that can lead someone to call himself a prophet is the pursuit of power and glory, because prophets exert an influence on their followers, who regard them as God's emissaries and honor them as such.

The English Reverend Reginald Bosworth Smith (1839-1908), who can hardly be suspected of complacency towards Islam and its prophet, wrote: "Muhammad was indifferent to the pomp of power. The simplicity of his private life was in perfect harmony with his public life."¹

His people offered to crown him on the simple condition that he put an end to his preaching. To his uncle, a polytheist, who came to advise him to renounce his mission in his own interest, the Prophet replied: "My uncle! I swear that if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left so that I would renounce my preaching, I would never renounce it, until God makes this religion triumph or I perish fulfilling my mission."²

He never sought glory but, on the contrary, kept repeating: "Do not praise me as the Christians praised Jesus. I am no more than a slave. Just say: His slave and His Messenger."³

Had Muhammad been seeking glory, he would have glorified himself in the Koran. Yet, contrary to the belief of non-Muslims, the Koran is not a book to the praise and glory of the Prophet - on the opposite he has been blamed in it more than once - but to the

¹ *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Bosworth Smith, Londres, 1874, p. 236

² *As-Sira*, Ibn Hicham.

³ Bukhari, 3446.

praise and glory of the Lord Who invites him to say to his contemporaries: "I am only a man like you, 'but' it has been revealed to me that your God is only One God."¹

The name of Muhammad was mentioned in the Koran only four times, while that of Jesus was repeated twenty-five times. As for Mary, it is the only female name that appeared in the Koran, while there is no mention of the Prophet's mother, wives or daughters. The Koran referred to the patriarchs of the Old Testament much more often than him. Thus, the name of Moses was repeated more than 130 times in the Koran and that of Abraham about 70 times.

Secondly: Wealth

A second reason that might lead a sane person to call himself a prophet is the desire to become rich. Well, more than once in the Koran, God asks the prophet to remind his contemporaries that he expects no reward from them in exchange for his preaching: " Say, 'I ask no reward of you for this 'Koran'—it is a reminder to the whole world.'"²

In addition, Muhammad was not in need, for his wife, Khadija, was a wealthy merchant in Makkah. Moreover, he did not derive any material benefit from his mission. On the contrary, his clan suffered for three years from a terrible siege by other clans in Makkah, which severed all social and commercial ties with them. Despite the famine that hit the Prophet and his clan, who were accused of backing him, Muhammad did not stop but persevered in his mission. "Neither indifference, nor injury to his self-esteem, nor damage to his material interests, nor intrigues or threats, nor even offers of compromise made several times by polytheists, could have turned

¹ Koran 18, 110.

² Koran 6, 90.

him away from his mission."¹ We shall see in the next chapter that the Prophet lived in abstinence and renunciation and left no wealth to his heirs.

Thirdly: insanity

This latter explanation has been put forward by some opponents of Islam from the time of the Prophet until today. Muhammad was sincere when he claimed to receive Revelation, but in reality, he heard "voices". This is the hypothesis formulated by the French historian Maxime Rodinson who wrote: "For centuries, Christians and rationalists have interpreted this text as a forgery by Muhammad, accused of deliberately attributing his thoughts and teachings to Allah. We have seen that this argument does not hold water. What is more likely, as I have explained, is that Muhammad actually felt and underwent a sensory experience, which he translated into words and writing and interpreted as a message from the Supreme Being. He has become accustomed to a certain way of receiving these revelations. His sincerity seems undeniable, especially in Makkah, when we see how Allah blames him, corrects him and leads him to acts he is reluctant to do."² Anyone who reads the Koran, a book of infinite wisdom, knows that such an explanation is no more valid than any other. Jacques Berque, who knows what he is talking about since he has made a magnificent translation of the Koran, wrote about it: "It is not necessary to be a Muslim to feel the beauty of this text, its unique splendor, its exhaustiveness and its universal value."³ No illuminated person has ever founded a religion.

Others explain that these voices were those of demons dictating the Koran to him. God addresses his prophet in the Koran in these

¹ *Le problème de Mahomet*, Régis Blachère, PUF, 1952, p. 129.

² *Mahomet*, Maxime Rodinson, Editions du Seuil, 1994, p. 270-271.

³ *L'Islam au temps du monde*, Jacques Berque, Sindbad, 1989, p. 20.

words: "When you are about to read the Koran, pray for God's protection against Satan." This verse alone is enough to refute such claims.

3- Words that a false prophet would never have uttered

God speaks directly to the Prophet

In many Koranic passages, God addresses the Prophet directly, as he did in the previous verse or in the following one: "You never expected this Book to be revealed to you, but it came only as a mercy from your Lord."² Now, only a madman or the most vile of impostors can address himself in this way, claiming to receive these words from God. But the very content of the Koran refutes these two hypotheses. For no illuminated man ever produced a text of such wisdom, and no impostor ever founded a religion that survived him. Finally, remember that the Koran describes impostors as the most wicked of beings. Therefore, if Muhammad was an impostor and at the same time condemned these impostors in the Koran, it would be extremely absurd and scandalous. This last hypothesis is today ruled out by the vast majority of specialists in Islam, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Verses that blame the Prophet

More than once in the Koran, the Prophet is rebuked by his Lord for his behavior, as in the following passage: "He frowned and turned 'his attention' away 'simply' because the blind man came to him 'interrupting. You never know 'O Prophet', perhaps he may be purified, or he may be mindful, benefitting from the reminder. As for the one who was indifferent, you gave him your 'undivided'

¹ Koran 16, 98.

² Koran 28, 86.

attention, even though you are not to blame if he would not be purified. But as for the one who came to you, eager to learn, being in awe of Allah, you were inattentive to him. But no!!"¹

According to the Prophet's biographers, a blind man came to see him and found him busy convincing some prominent people from Makkah of the benefits of Islam. The blind man interrupted the Prophet and asked him about certain religious teachings. The Prophet frowned and turned away from the blind man whose faith he knew, preferring to carry on with the prominent Makkahn people whose hearts he hoped to win over to Islam. The Prophet was blamed for his reaction in a Surah titled *the Frowning Face*.

Again, no one can blame himself in this way and attribute it to God, unless he is so stupid or one of the most despicable people. However, both hypotheses are today rejected by the vast majority of researchers who find no acceptable explanation for this type of verse.

Verses that threaten the Prophet

Other verses without explanation, if one holds to the assumption that the Koran is the work of Muhammad, are those in which the Prophet is threatened. For example, God said of Muhammad: "Had the Messenger made up something in Our Name We would have certainly seized him by his right hand then severed his aorta and none of you could have shielded him 'from Us'."² These divine words are a resounding answer to those who accuse Muhammad of falsely attributing the Koran to God.

Another threat to the Prophet: "Had We not made you steadfast, you probably would have inclined to them a little and then We truly

¹ Koran 80, 1-11.

² Koran 69, 44-47

would have made you taste double 'punishment' both in this life and after death, and you would have found no helper against Us"¹

Verses that comfort the Prophet

On several occasions, God comforts his prophet as in the following verses where he is invited not to grieve for the ungodliness of his people: "So do not grieve yourself to death over them 'O Prophet'".² And: "We certainly know that what they say grieves you 'O Prophet'".³ The assumption that the Koran was composed by Muhammad, or even by his successors, does not stand up to such verses.

Verses that urge the Prophet to follow the right path

Being a man like any other, Muhammad was commanded to follow the straight path: "Be steadfast as you are commanded, and do not follow their desires"⁴ but also, to fear God: "O Prophet! 'Always' be mindful of Allah!"⁵

Long-awaited verses

The Prophet's wife was slandered by the hypocrites of Madinah, accusations that deeply affected the Prophet's honor. Were the verses proclaiming her innocence revealed immediately? No, it took a long month before this Koranic passage was revealed: "Indeed, those who came up with that 'outrageous' slander are a group of you. Do not think this is bad for you."⁶

¹ Koran 17, 74-75.

² Koran 35, 8.

³ Koran 6, 33.

⁴ Koran 42, 15.

⁵ Koran 33, 1.

⁶ Koran 24, 11.

Chapter 2

The mark of a prophet

1- Semite of Abraham's posterity

This is how the Catholic Emile Dermenghem describes the Prophet: "Muhammad is undoubtedly a prophet of the Semitic biblical lineage: lyrical and passionate soul, fearless heart."¹

Lamartine, an admirer of the prophet of Islam, affirmed that the Semites, nomadic people of the desert, were the most mystical people, gifted for the contemplation and the meditation of the creation: "Far from giving credit to this mystical and pious race for the superiority which the men of that time attributed to the exclusively calculating and skeptical peoples of the West, we believe that God gave the best of it, according to the expression of the Gospel, to the pastoral peoples of Arabia."²

We mentioned at the beginning of this book the promise that the Lord made to Abraham to make his descendants a great nation, and the covenant that God made with the great patriarch and his descendants, a covenant whose sign is circumcision. We then showed that this promise could only refer to the birth of nations guided by prophets. And indeed, all the prophets who came after Abraham belong to his posterity, whether they are Jews, like the biblical prophets, Arabs, like Muhammad, or Midianites, like the Jethro of the Bible, who is described as a prophet in the Koran.

¹ *Mabomet et la tradition islamique*, Dermenghem, Le Seuil, Paris, 1994, p. 11

² *La vie de Mabomet*, Lamartine, Paris, 1854, p. 45.

The Koran affirms that all the prophets who lived after Abraham are his descendants, and it is a clear fulfillment of the promise that the Lord made to the patriarch: "We blessed him with Isaac and 'later' Jacob, and reserved prophethood and revelation for his descendants."¹

2- The beginning of the Revelation

The Call from Above

The account of the first revelation Muhammad received when he was forty years old is very instructive.

In one of the many caves around Makkah, where Muhammad liked to retreat to meditate on the mysteries of creation, he was visited by the angel of revelation. The angel Gabriel commanded him: "Read!" "I cannot read," he replied. The Prophet himself continues the story: "The angel seized me and held me tight to the point that I almost lost consciousness. Then he let go of me and said: "Recite", to which I replied: I am not lettered. The angel grabbed me a second time and squeezed me so hard that I almost lost all my strength; thereafter he let me off and said: Recite. I said: I am not lettered. He took hold of me and pressed me for the third time, till I was hard pressed and then let me go and said: Read, 'O Prophet, ' in the Name of your Lord Who created— created humans from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous."² Then the Prophet returned therewith, his heart was trembling, and he went to Khadija who immediately reassured him: "It can't be. Be happy. I swear by Allah that He shall never humiliate you. By Allah, you join ties of relationship, you speak the truth, you bear people's burden, you help the destitute, you entertain guests, and you help against the vicissitudes which affect people." Khadija

¹ Koran 29, 27

² Koran 96, 1-3.

then took him to Waraqa, her cousin who had embraced Christianity in the Days of Ignorance (i. e. before Islam) and who knew the Gospel and the Torah, and could read and write Hebrew. To the Prophet who described his vision to him, Waraqa explained: "This is the same angel that God sent to Moses. Would that I were then (during your prophetic career) a young man! Would that I might be alive when your people would expel you." The Messenger of Allah said: "Will they drive me out?" Waraqa said: "Yes, they will, for no one has come with what you bring without being persecuted."¹

It should be noted that shortly before the beginning of his mission, Muhammad withdrew to a cave in Makkah, just as Jesus, before beginning his own ministry, retreated to the desert². It was also in the solitude of the desert that Moses, leading his father-in-law's flock to pasture, first heard the call of the Lord and received the visit of the angel³.

His age at the beginning of his mission

Let us take a look at the age of Muhammad when he received his first revelation: forty years. This number of forty, according to Saint Augustine, expresses perfection. Irenaeus of Lyons says that Jesus was about forty years old when he began to receive revelation. Irenaeus relied in particular on this chapter of John: "The Jews said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham!'"⁴ In the same way, according to the Koran, the age of

¹ Boukhari, 3.

² Mark 1, 12-13.

³ Exodus 3, 1-2.

⁴ John 8, 57. Nevertheless, according to Luke (3:23), Jesus "was about thirty years old when he began his ministry". Jesus was therefore between thirty and fifty years old when he became a prophet, which may correspond to forty years old, the age of Muhammad at the beginning of his mission. In the case of Moses, the historical data is not reliable enough to give a figure.

forty is that of full maturity. God says, "In time, when the child reaches their prime at the age of forty."¹

Another remark must be made here. Muhammad declared himself a prophet when he was forty years old. As such, he lived most of his life in his tribe, in which he was well known. In particular, he was known for his honesty. The least that can be said is that he did not have the reputation of being a liar, otherwise he would not have had so many followers. The Koran recalls this important element in support of the authenticity of his mission: "Say: "Had Allah willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. I had lived my whole life among you before this 'revelation. Do you not understand?"² This verse can also be interpreted in this way: I spent forty years amongst you without ever claiming to be a prophet. Why should I suddenly do so at such an advanced age, an age when men long for rest and tranquility?

The Interruption of Revelation

After this first episode, the revelation is interrupted for a while, which distressed the Prophet so much that he repeatedly contemplated throwing himself from a mountain top³. Finally, the Revelation resumed and did not stop until his death.

The Prophet's Eagerness to memorize the Revelation

At the start of his mission, the prophet endured great difficulties with the Revelation, moving his lips quickly in order to keep pace with the angel Gabriel who was reciting the Koran to him, until this verse was revealed to him: "Exalted is Allah, the True King! Do not rush to recite a revelation of the Koran 'O Prophet' before it is

¹ Koran 46, 15.

² Koran 10, 16.

³ Bukhari, 6982.

properly conveyed to you."¹ In other words, keep silent until the angel Gabriel has finished reciting it to you, only then can you repeat it after him without fear of forgetting it.

After the revelation of this verse, when Gabriel presented himself to him, the prophet listened carefully to the words that were revealed to him, and after the angel left, he simply recited them as Gabriel had taught him.²

3- The Orphan Prophet

The Prophet was born an orphan because, according to tradition, his father passed away while he was still in the womb of his mother who died of an illness when he was only six years old. Orphaned by his father and mother, he was entrusted to the care of his grandfather and, after his grandfather's death, to his paternal uncle. God reminds us in the Koran of the care He will give to Muhammad: "Did He not find you as an orphan then sheltered you?"³

The absence of the father is a striking element in the life of the greatest prophets. Jesus was born without a father, and the accounts of the Jewish prophets in the Bible and the Koran do not mention Moses' father, while his mother is mentioned several times. As for Abraham, he was disowned by his polytheistic father, who even drove him out of his hometown⁴.

4- No one is a prophet in his own country

Another common trait of the greatest prophets is that they are persecuted by their people to the point of having to emigrate and leave their homeland.

¹ Koran 20, 114.

² Boukhari, 5.

³ Koran 93, 6.

⁴ Koran 19, 41-48.

Abraham

We have just seen how Abraham, according to the Koran, was chased away by his father who did not admit that he criticized the pagan practices of his people. According to the Bible, obeying the call of Yahweh, the true God, Abraham left his country, Harran, a city dedicated to the worship of the stars, and settled in the land of Canaan.

Moses

According to biblical and Koranic accounts, Moses is forced to flee his homeland, Egypt, where he has just killed an Egyptian in defense of a Hebrew. He finds refuge in Midian where he is welcomed by Jethro. After a long absence, he is, by order of the Lord, back in Egypt from which he leads the Hebrew people out.

Jesus

As a Jew from Galilee, Jesus is very badly received in his own homeland, which makes him say: "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."¹

Muhammad

The Hegira, the forced emigration of the Prophet and the Muslims from Makkah, their homeland, to Madinah, is so important that it marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. It was to escape persecution from the pagans in Makkah that the Muslims had to leave their homeland.

5- Prophet and shepherd

Another thing the prophets had in common was that they were all shepherds. Thus, the Prophet said: "Allah did not send any prophet

¹ Mark 6, 4.

but shepherded sheep." His companions asked him: "Did you do the same?" The Prophet replied: "Yes, I used to shepherd the sheep of the people of Makkah for some Qirats (a few pennies)."¹

All the patriarchs of the Bible, from Abraham to Moses, were indeed shepherds, as is written in the Vigouroux Bible Dictionary: "The patriarchs of the descendants of Seth were all great shepherds. The flocks of Abraham and Lot were too large for their shepherds to live together in the same region, so the two patriarchs had to separate. Gen. XIII, 7, 8: Later, Isaac's shepherds and the shepherds of the Philistine nation in the valley of Gerarai also had a dispute over the use of a well. Genesis XVI,20. Jacob was herding Laban's flocks. Genesis, XXIX, 18."

Moses is also known to have been a shepherd to his father-in-law, Jethro. It was in the desert, where he was leading his flock, that Moses first heard the Lord's call for an angelic visitation². King David was a shepherd before he ascended the throne, just as Amos was a shepherd before he became a prophet of God. While the gospels do not indicate that Jesus tended sheep, he describes himself as a shepherd in the parable of the "good shepherd" where he says: "I am the good shepherd."³

6- The devotion of a prophet

The Prophet performed, out of sight in his own home, acts of worship that can only be explained by the sincerity of his faith. His wife Aisha relates that the Prophet kept standing (in prayer) so long that the skin of his feet would crack⁴. She recounts this episode: "I slept one night before the Messenger of God, my feet where he was to lay his forehead. He touched my feet and I took them off and let

¹ Bukhari, 2262.

² Exode 3, 1-2.

³ Jean 10, 11.

⁴ Boukhari, 4718.

him bow down. Then when he got up, I stretched out my feet again." Aisha added: "At that time, houses didn't have lamps."¹

Thus the Prophet obeyed this divine command: "And rise at the last part of the night, offering additional prayers, so your Lord may raise you to a station of praise."² He even used to urge his family to imitate him, and to pray in the middle of the night as he does. Thus, according to the account of his son-in-law Ali, the Prophet visited him and his daughter Fatima one night and said to them, "Won't you pray (at night)?"³

Chapter 3

The qualities of a prophet

1- Sincere faith and total surrender to the Divinity

We have shown in the previous chapter that the prophet performed a multitude of acts of devotion, proof of his unshakable faith in the God who had sent him. It was the same faith that led him to trust in God in all things and to carry on with preaching despite persecution. As we have said over and over, no serious Islamologist today questions the sincerity of Muhammad's faith. Thomas Carlyle's book on the heroes of history constitutes one of the turning points in the study of the Prophet's life. Here is what

¹ Bukhari, 513.

² Koran 17, 79.

³ Bukhari, 1127; Muslim.

William Montgomery Watt (1909-2006), a Scottish orientalist and Anglican priest, wrote about the subject: "Since Carlyle's study of Muhammad in his "Heroes and Heroworship", the West has realized that there are strong arguments for being convinced of Muhammad's sincerity. His willingness to endure persecution for his faith, the high character of the men who believed in him and of whom he was the leader, and the greatness of his work in his later achievements, all testify to the extent of his righteousness. Suspecting Muhammad of being an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Yet, none of the great personalities of history has been so misjudged in the West as Muhammad has been."¹

Already at the beginning of the 20th century, Henry de Castries affirmed that the sincerity of Muhammad was generally accepted by Western scholars: "The first hypothesis that criticism had to discuss was that of Muhammad's sincerity, and we have said that this sincerity had been admitted, with some restrictions, by most orientalists as well as by Christian apologists. He adds a few pages later: "Immense faith, absolute sincerity, are two virtues that cannot be denied to Muhammad in the first part of his life."²

More recently, Emile Dermenghem confirmed the point of view of Thomas Carlyle, Montgomery Watt or Henry de Castries: "His sincerity cannot be questioned today. His whole life, in spite of his faults (which he did not deny), testifies that he believed deeply in his mission."³

Proof of Mouhammad's sincere faith, was the way he surrendered himself to God in all things. Thus, when he emigrated to Madinah with Abu Bakr, the two men found refuge in a cave where they hid for three days until the search subsided down. Some pagans passed

¹ *Mahomet*, Montgomery Watt, Payot, 1959, p. 77.

² *Ibidem*, p. 48.

³ *La vie de Mahomet*, Emile Dermenghem, Plon, 1979, p. 277.

so close to the two men that Abu Bakr whispered to him: "If one of them looks toward his feet, he will see us." The Prophet reassured him: "What do you think of two, the third of whom is Allah?"¹ This episode is mentioned in this Koranic passage: "It does not matter if you 'believers' do not support him, for Allah did in fact support him when the disbelievers drove him out 'of Makkah' and he was only one of two. While they both were in the cave, he reassured his companion, "Do not worry; Allah is certainly with us."!"²

Even though the vast majority of Western scholars today acknowledge the sincerity of Muhammad, they nevertheless did not accept him as a prophet. How can these two seemingly contradictory positions be reconciled? By attributing, as we have said, the Revelation that Muhammad claimed to have received to psychological causes, or even to fits of epilepsy. Arguments rejected outright by Roger du Pasquier: "The studies conducted in the West in an attempt to determine the sources from which Muhammad allegedly would have drawn his inspiration or to demonstrate the psychological phenomenon by which he would have drawn his inspiration from his 'unconscious' have only ever proved one thing: the anti-Muslim prejudice of their authors."³ Similarly, Montgomery Watt refuses to see in Muhammad's religious experiences simple epileptic seizures: "Some opponents of Islam have often asserted that Muhammad was epileptic and therefore his religious experiences were invalid. In fact, the symptoms described are not the same as those of epilepsy, which leads to physical and mental decay, whereas Muhammad never ceased to be in full possession of his faculties."⁴

¹ Muslim, 1854.

² Koran 9, 40.

³ *Découverte de l'islam*, Du Pasquier, Les trois continents, 1985, p. 63.

⁴ *Mahomet*, Montgomery Watt, Payot, 1959, p. 83.

2- Sincerity and honesty

If Muhammad was sincere in his faith, he was also sincere with men, as witnessed by an episode that contradicts the idea that he was an impostor: on the day his son Ibrahim died as a young boy, a solar eclipse occurred. Some among the Muslims believed that the sun was eclipsed because of the death of the Prophet's son. But the Prophet said: "The sun and moon are two signs of God. They do not become eclipsed for death or birth of anyone."¹

The Arabs believed at that time that the sun and the moon become eclipsed at the death of an important person. Other superstitions surrounded solar and lunar eclipses before science could explain them. Impressive phenomena, they gave rise to many myths, each people associating a celestial animal taking possession of the moon or the sun at the time of the eclipse: wolf in Germanic mythologies, dragon in Chinese mythologies.

We are therefore far from the explanation, how rational, of the Prophet who, moreover - as an impostor would not have failed to do - did not seek to take advantage of this eclipse which coincided with the death of his son. He could have been content to remain silent and let others give free rein to their imaginations, without himself being considered a liar. But he did better than that. He fought this superstition without taking advantage of the situation. Emile Dermenghem considers Muhammad's attitude at the time of his son's death as the best proof of his sincerity, saying rightly that such words cannot be those of an impostor.

3- Compassion and kindness

The death of his son Ibrahim revealed another aspect of the Prophet's personality unknown to some: his compassion. Indeed,

¹ Bukhari, 1044.

when he visited his dying son, his eyes overflowed with tears. One of his companions wondered: "You too, Envoy of God?" The Prophet replied: "This is nothing but compassion," before adding: "The eye weeps and the heart grieves, but we say only what our Lord is pleased with, and we are grieved for you, Ibrahim."¹

The compassion of the Prophet also extends to non-Muslims whose salvation he wished for. We find echoes² of this in the Koran: "Perhaps you 'O Prophet' will grieve yourself to death over their disbelief."³

"His kindness was shown even to animals, which is remarkable for the time he lived in and for this part of the world," writes Montgomery Watt in his biography of Muhammad.⁴ Watt refers to this hadith where, when asked, "Will people receive a reward for what they did to animals," the Prophet replied: "A reward is given in connection with every living creature."⁵

Muhammad's clemency is even recognized by his opponents. Gustave Le Bon wrote on this subject: "If we must judge the value of men by the greatness of the works they founded, we can say that Muhammed was one of the greatest men in history. Religious prejudices have prevented many historians from recognizing the importance of his work. However, Christian writers themselves are now beginning to do him justice. Here is how one of the most distinguished of them, Mr. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, expresses himself in this regard: "Muhammad was the most intelligent, the most religious, the most merciful Arab of his time. He owed his empire only to his superiority. The religion preached by him was an

¹ Bukhari, 1303

² *Mahomet*, Montgomery Watt, Payot, 1959, p. 600.

³ Koran 26, 3.

⁴ *Mahomet*, Montgomery Watt, Payot, 1959, p. 600.

⁵ Bukhari, 2323

invaluable blessing for the races that adopted it."¹

Ernest Renan paints a surprisingly dithyrambic picture of the prophet of Islam: "In short, it seems to us that Muhammad is a gentle, sensitive and faithful man who does not harbor hatred for anyone. His affections were sincere; his character generally tends to benevolence. When you shake hands with him, he responds warmly to you and never withdrew his hand first. He greeted small children and showed great tenderness of heart for women and the weak."²

Laura Veccia Vaglieri describes the Prophet in equally laudatory terms: "As for Muhammad, as a Messenger of the divine revelation, he was gentle and merciful even to his staunch enemies. His soul was the mixture of justice and mercy, two of the noblest qualities the human mind can conceive of."³

4- Renunciation and poverty

One day, Umar, the future second Caliph of Islam, presented himself to the Prophet, whom he found reclining upon a mat woven from fibers that left marks upon his side. With eyes flowing with tears, Umar said to him: "Envoy of God! Look at how the Persian and Byzantine emperors live, and how you live even though you are God's chosen one." The Prophet, who was lying down, sat down and said: 'does it not please you (to know) that (these things) are for us in the Hereafter and for them in this world?'⁴ The same Umar reported that he "saw God's Messenger spend the whole day writhing in pain because of hunger, not getting even an inferior

¹ *La Civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

² *Etudes d'histoire religieuse*, Ernest Renan, Garnier, 1992, p. 187.

Etudes d'histoire religieuse, Ernest Renan, Garnier, 1992, p. 187.

³ *Apologia dell' Islamismo*, A. F. Formiggini, Rome, 1925.

⁴ Bukhari, 3629.

quality of dates with which he could fill his belly."¹

According to the French orientalist Henry de Castries "his sobriety was extreme and he left this world," reports Abu-Hureira, "without ever eating to the fill bread of barley. Finally, he was not ambitious and yet he knew how to be the most important human being in Arabia without trying to get his hooks into it."²

The Prophet acquired no wealth, unlike the kings and rulers of the earth: "His inheritance consists of a house that he built with his own hands and some camels, and it is the inheritance that he returned to the treasury, for he had said: "A prophet leaves no inheritance to his family. His goods belong to the nation""³ His wife Aisha relates: "When God's Envoy died, there was nothing in my house that a living being could eat, except some barley lying on a shelf."⁴

Now, we have seen that one of the reasons that can drive a man to declare himself a prophet is the desire to get rich.

5-Humility and simplicity

Muhammad lived soberly as does someone who sees himself as a humble servant of God. Renan describes him as follows: "He had retained the demure nature of Arab manners; no idea of majesty. His bed was a simple coat, and his pillow is made of leather stuffed with palm leaves. He could be seen milking his own sheep and sitting on the ground fixing his clothes and shoes."⁵ The French historian Georges Peyronnet also paints a picture of a modest man prone to charity: "He was particularly charity-minded. It is known that he forbade usury and fixed the legal alms. He was simple in

¹ Muslim, 2978.

² *L'Islam : impressions et études*, Henry de Castries, A. Colin, Paris, 1907, p. 49.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

⁴ Bukhari, 3029.

⁵ *Etudes d'histoire religieuse*, Ernest Renan, Garnier, 1992, p. 188.

appearance, usually smiling, but always with a great concern for his dignity. Some of his followers claimed that he performed miracles, which he denied."¹

One of his companions once told him: "You are our lord and the best of us." The Prophet replied: "The only Lord is God! Say what you want, but do not let Satan lead you astray. I do not wish you to elevate me above my rank, the rank that God Almighty has placed me in. I am only the servant and envoy of God."²In this way, the Prophet was only putting his own teachings into practice, saying to his companions: "He who has, in his heart, an ant's weight of arrogance will not enter Paradise."³

Edouard Gibbon also describes Muhammad's simplicity: "The good sense of Mahomet despised the pomp of royalty: the apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family: he kindled the fire, swept the floor, milked the ewes, and mended with his own hands his shoes and his woollen garment."⁴

¹ *L'Islam et la civilisation islamique, VII^e -XIII^e s.*, Colin, Paris, 1992.

² Ahmad, 12295.

³ Muslim, 225.

⁴ *Histoire du déclin et de la chute de l'Empire romain*, Robert Laffont, 1983, p. 515.

Chapter 4

Answers to some of the Prophet's criticisms

The prophet of Islam has been, and still is, the object of much criticism in the West, as Pierre Crapon de Caprona explains in his study of the Koran, where he exposes the reasons for these fierce attacks: "The truth is that Muhammad, who is the founder of a civilization, stands on the horizon of history as a unique personality. But since this civilization has been in direct and semi-permanent conflict with us for more than thirteen centuries, we have not had the opportunity to understand it, because to understand it is to accept values contrary to our own, which has made "Western writers inclined to believe the worst of Muhammad, and whenever the slightest critical interpretation of a fact could pass for plausibility, they are ready to accept it at face value.""¹

Western criticism is mainly focused on the issue of the Prophet's polygamy. Keeping in mind the model of Christ and the celibacy claimed by Catholic clerics, the critics of the Prophet forget that most biblical prophets had several wives: Abraham had three wives and concubines, Jacob four, David eight wives and ten concubines, Solomon seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines!²

The anthropologist Gustave Le Bon shows the benefits of this purely oriental practice: "the reader who wants to read this chapter, setting aside his prejudices as a European, will be convinced, I hope,

¹ *Le Coran : aux sources de la parole oraculaire*, Publications Orientalistes de France, 1981, p. 129.

² 1 Kings 11, 3.

that polygamy in the East is an excellent institution which greatly elevates the moral level of the peoples who practice it, imparts more solidity to the family and makes women, in the end, more respected and happier than in Europe. Before beginning this argument, let me first of all recall that polygamy is completely independent of Islam, since it existed before Muhammad among all the peoples of the East: Jews, Persians, Arabs, etc. The nations that followed the Koran had therefore nothing to gain in this aspect by adopting it."¹

He adds: "In the West, where the climate and temperament are far less demanding, monogamy is only found in codes, and no one will dispute, I think, that it is very rarely observed in morals. I do not see how the legal polygamy of Orientals is inferior to the hypocritical polygamy of Europeans, whereas I see very well, on the contrary, how it is superior to it."²

Roger du Pasquier responds to the accusations leveled at the Prophet of having a tendency towards sensuality due to polygamy: "For more than twenty years Muhammad has been the ideal husband for a woman fifteen years older than him [...] After Khadija's death, he lived for several years in total continence and it was only at fifty-three years of age that he began to practice polygamy. It is not reasonable to assert, as some Western writers have done, that Muhammad, once in Madinah, suddenly gave in to the temptations of the "flesh". He had by then become the leader of a community whose influence was steadily increasing, and since he held a somewhat patriarchal office, most of the marriages he entered into from then on were of political nature."³

Let us add that all the women he married were widows, with the exception of Aisha, as Edward Gibbon explains: "If we remember

¹ *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Découverte de l'islam*, Du Pasquier, Les trois continents, 1985, p. 56-57.

the seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines of the wise Solomon, we shall applaud the modesty of the Arabian, who espoused no more than seventeen or fifteen wives; eleven are enumerated who occupied at Madinah their separate apartments round the house of the apostle, and enjoyed in their turns the favor of his conjugal society. What is singular enough, they were all widows, excepting only Ayesha, the daughter of Abubeker."¹

Some even argue that the reason for the spread of Islam is its loose morals, to which Gustave Le Bon responds, saying: "The tremendous speed with which the Koran spread among the people continues to baffle historians hostile to this religion and who found no explanation except saying that the spread was the result of Muhammad's loose morals and the use of force, but it is easy to show that these explanations have not the slightest foundation. One only has to read the Koran to be convinced that his morality is just as severe as those of other religions. Polygamy is indeed allowed, but since it was already in use in the East before Muhammad, those who adopted the Koran could not find any new advantage in this respect. The argument based on the inferior state of Muhammad's morals has long been refuted, especially by the learned philosopher Bayle. After pointing out that the Prophet's rules regarding fasting, deprivation of wine, and the precepts of morality are much stricter than those of the Christians, Bayle added: "It is, therefore, an illusion to claim that the law of Muhammad was implanted with such rapidity and extent only because it freed man from the constraints required by the observance of good works and painful observances and allowed him to indulge in bad morals. One can say without flattering this religion that the most excellent precepts that can be given to man for the practice of virtue and to keep away from

¹ *Histoire de la décadence et de la chute de l'empire romain*, Edward Gibbon.

Traduction : M. F. Guizot, tome 10, chapitre L, Paris, 1819.

vice are found in these apophthegms.””¹

The truth is that Islam is one of the strictest religions, which is another proof of its authenticity. Indeed, a false prophet could not impose on his believers the obligatory alms, the five daily prayers, or fasting for a whole month from dawn to dusk, which is difficult to bear under the burning sun of the Arabian Peninsula. Nor could he deprive them of usury, gambling or alcohol, which the Arabs, like other peoples, indulge in.

Voltaire responds to those who criticize the allegedly "loose" morality of Islam: "Canons, monks, even priests, if you were forbidden to eat or drink in the month of July from four o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock in the evening, since at that time Lent begins; if you were forbidden, under penalty of damnation, to play any game of chance; if, under the same penalty, wine were forbidden; if you had to make a pilgrimage through scorching deserts; if you were ordered to give at least two and a half percent of your income to the poor; if, accustomed to enjoying eighteen wives, fourteen were suddenly snatched from you; in good faith, would you dare to call this religion sensual?"²

Voltaire insists on the humane and strict character of Islam: "Its religion is wise, severe, chaste, and humane: wise because it does not fall into the insanity of attributing partners to God nor does it have mystery. It is severe because it forbids gambling, wine and strong liquors, and orders prayer five times a day. It is chaste, since it limits to four women the tremendous number of wives who shared the bed of all the princes of the East. It is human, since it enjoins us to give alms, much more strictly than the journey to Makkah. Add to

¹ *La civilisation des Arabes*, Gustave Le Bon, La Fontaine au Roy, 1990.

² *Dictionnaire philosophique*, Voltaire, 1764

all these characters of truth, tolerance."¹

Nevertheless, the image of Muhammad in the West has undergone a great change for the better, so that today he is only attacked by those who know nothing about his life. The Encyclopedia of Islam places this change at the beginning of the 18th century with Boulainvilliers' *Life of Muhammad*: "The first biography of Muhammad that combines an effort towards historical accuracy with a positive appreciation of his personality and of Islam is Boulainvilliers' *Life of Muhammad* (published after his death in London, 1730). This author describes Muhammad as a man of genius, a great legislator, a conqueror and a monarch whose doctrine is characterized by justice and tolerance. A positive image is also provided by Leibniz in his *Theodizee* (1710), because the Prophet did not deviate from the "natural religion". In his *Essay on Morals* (1756) as well as in the *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764), Voltaire admires in Muhammad the conqueror, the legislator, the sovereign and also the priest. Impressed by Boulainvilliers' portrait, he insists on Muhammad's greatness and sees in him an advocate of tolerance."²

The first objective biography of Muhammad is thus, according to the Encyclopedia of Islam, that of Boulainvilliers, published in 1730. We have seen that Watt placed this turning point a century later with Carlyle's *Heroes and Heroworship*. But in reality, the first unbiased biography of the prophet of Islam is that of the Englishman Henry Stubbe, published in 1671, which, some say, sparked "a Copernican revolution in the study of Islam."³ Muhammad is depicted there as "an extraordinary man" and as "a noble soul". According to Stubbe,

¹ *Il faut prendre un parti* (1772), dans Œuvres complètes de Voltaire, Moland, 1875, vol. 28, p. 547.

² *Encyclopédie de l'islam*, Maisonneuve et Larose, vol. VII, 1993, p. 384.

³ *Encyclopédie de l'islam*, Maisonneuve et Larose, vol. VII, 1993, p. 384.

far from corrupting Christianity, he wanted to restore its original purity altered by the pagan dogmas and rites introduced by the Church. According to him, Jesus never claimed divinity and the first Christians, Jews themselves, did not consider him a god. Constantine, Stubbe explains, summoned two thousand bishops to the Council of Nicaea, but only consulted the opinions of three hundred and eighteen of them. Thus, the canons and symbols adopted by this council and imposed on the entire empire did not represent a Christian consensus.

The similarity between these conclusions of Stubbe and Muslim dogma is striking. Stubbe's view of the nature of Jesus and the history of the Church is shared by the vast majority of historians of Christianity and Bible critics today. Stubbe praises the five pillars of Islam. According to him, pilgrimage and fasting train the body and mind, while almsgiving, Zakat, limits the accumulation of wealth and luxury. The obligation to pray five times a day promotes sobriety and discipline.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a radical change in Western writers' perception of the prophet of Islam: Theodor Nöldeke, a German orientalist, asserted that Muhammad should be considered a prophet¹. Muhammad is no longer only a great legislator and a distinguished reformer, but also a sincere man and a true Abrahamic prophet. The English Reverend Reginald Bosworth Smith (1839-1908) predicted even in 1874 that Christians would one day recognize him as a true prophet.² Reginald Bosworth Smith's prediction has been somewhat fulfilled in the 20th century through the declarations of Vatican II. In 1964, the Church, through the voice of Pope Paul VI, recognized for the first time in history that "the goal of salvation also includes those who recognize the Creator,

¹ *Geschichte des Qorâns*, Theodor Nöldeke, Göttingen, 1860, p. 2.

² *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Bosworth Smith, Londres, 1874, p. 292

mainly Muslims." Encouraged by such declarations, some men of the Church will not hesitate to recognize in Muhammad a true prophet. This is the case of the Belgian Jesuit Jacques Dupuis (1923-2004), former professor of theology at the Gregorian University of Rome, who, in his book entitled *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, affirms that non-Christian religions have a saving value. For him, the gift of prophecy is not exclusively reserved for the Hebrews, as shown by the case of Muhammad, whose monotheistic message is, according to him, a divine revelation conveyed by an authentic prophet.¹

Conclusion

We have shown, by the announcement of his coming by the prophets who preceded him, by his own prophecies which have been fulfilled to this day, by the message he has brought to mankind, by the achievements attributed to him and the qualities recognized by his most stubborn enemies, that Muhammad could only be a true prophet who came, in the line of the Semitic prophets, to teach the purest monotheism and the highest morality.

It is not surprising, therefore, to witness the religion he advocates progressing unchecked to the point of becoming, within fifty years or so, according to the most reliable projections, the world's leading religion. We should not be surprised if we see more and more men and women of Judeo-Christian background who were not predisposed to adopt this religion embracing Islam.

Who would have expected that the Dutch Islamophobes Arnoud

¹ *Vers une théologie chrétienne du pluralisme religieux*, Dupuis, Le Cerf, Paris, 1997.

van Doorn or Joram van Klaveren would one day embrace this religion after the ferocious smear campaign of denigration they have led against it?

Who could have guessed that artists at the top of their careers like Cat Stevens or Diam's would give up their fame for such a denigrated religion? What could have motivated feminists like Dominique Thewissen or Susan Janet Carland to put on the much criticized "Islamic veil?"

What force could well push so many unknown Muslims, in France in particular, to openly declare their Islam defying the risk of being attacked and discriminated against? This force is none other but the unshakeable faith to hold the truth, a faith which has long since left these secularized societies and these men and women who have made secularism their new religion. One should not be surprised to see the Islamic religion being fought today by its enemies more than any other faith.

"He is the One Who has sent His Messenger with true guidance and the religion of truth, making it prevail over all others, even to the dismay of the polytheists."¹



¹ Koran 9, 33

Summary of the proofs for the authenticity of the Prophet's mission

- Proof 1: God chose the family of Abraham (Koran 3:33-34)
- Proof 2: God blessed Shem among the sons of Noah (Genesis 9:25-27)
- Proof 3: God made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:1-7)
- Proof 4: God promises an empire to his descendants (Genesis 15:18)
- Proof 5: The token of the covenant: circumcision (Genesis 17:10-11)
- Proof 6: God promises Hagar an enormous posterity (Genesis 16, 10)
- Proof 7: Abraham pleads with God for Ishmael (Genesis 17:18)
- Proof 8: Ishmael is blessed by God (Genesis 17:20)
- Proof 9: The covenant also applies to Ishmael (Genesis 21:13)
- Proof 10: The covenant also applies to Ishmael (Genesis 18:18-19)
- Proof 11: The covenant applies to the son of the handmaid (Genesis 30:1-13)
- Proof 12: The sons of Israel broke the covenant (1 Kings 19:14)
- Proof 13: The kingdom of God will be taken from them (Matt. 21:43)
- Proof 14: And it will be given to a single nation)
- Proof 15: The "foolish nation" is the Arab nation (Deut. 32:21)
- Proof 16: This nation is not called by God's name (Isaiah 65:1)
- Proof 17: The Kingdom is not contemporary with Jesus (Mark 1:15)
- Proof 18: The rabbis confirm the fulfillment of the promise to Ishmael
- Proof 19: The divine blessing is never merely profane
- Proof 20: Daniel's vision (Daniel, chapter 7)
- Proof 21: The mention of Qedar in the Bible (Isaiah 60:7)
- Proof 22: Isaiah's Oracle on Arabia (Isaiah 21:13-17)
- Proof 23: The Hebrew people originated in Arabia
- Proof 24: Paul places Mount Sinai in Arabia (Galatians 4:25)
- Proof 25: Flavius Joseph places Sinai in northern Arabia
- Proof 26: Mount Paran is in Arabia
- Proof 27: This mountain is associated with God by Moses (Deut. 33:2)
- Proof 28: The pilgrims of Arabia and the new Jerusalem (Isaiah 60:6)
- Proof 29: Believers will no longer worship God in Jerusalem (John 4:21)
- Proof 30: Makkah is mentioned by name in the Bible (Ps. 84:6)
- Proof 31: The Prophet announced by Moses (Deut. 18:18)
- Proof 32: The Jews are waiting for another prophet than the Messiah

- Proof 33: The Prophet announced by Jacob (Genesis 49:10)
- Proof 34: The terms Shiloh and Islam have the same origin
- Proof 35: The Prophet announced by Isaiah (Isaiah 42:1-11)
- Proof 36: The Arabs, the only people invited to rejoice in the Bible
- Proof 37: The Paraclete announced by Jesus (John 16:7-13)
- Proof 38: The Paraclete is the prince of the world (John 14:30)
- Proof 39: The Paraclete cannot be the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21-22)
- Proof 40: The Paraclete is an intercessor like Jesus (John 14:16)
- Proof 41: The Son of Man is not Jesus (Matthew 24:44)
- Proof 42: The Prophet announces the death of his daughter
- Proof 43: He foretells the conquest of Arabia, Persia and Byzantium
- Proof 44: He announces the conquest of Egypt
- Proof 45: He announces that Arabia will become green again
- Proof 46: He prophesies the race for skyscrapers
- Proof 47: The Quran predicts the victory of the Byzantines (Koran 30:2-5)
- Proof 48: The Koran foretells the triumph of Islam (Koran 24:55)
- Proof 49: God announces that He will preserve the Koran (Koran 15, 9)
- Proof 50: God announces that He will facilitate its memorization (Koran 54, 17)
- Proof 51: And that Muhammad is the last prophet (Koran 33, 40)
- Proof 52: The Koran presents the story of Creation (Koran 21, 30)
- Proof 53: The Koran tells the story of the biblical prophets
- Proof 54: The Koranic account of the Flood is consistent with History
- Proof 55: The ruler of Joseph's time is a king, not a pharaoh
- Proof 56: Pharaoh's body will be rejected by the sea (Koran 10:92)
- Proof 57: Pharaoh was both worshipped and a worshipper (Koran 79, 24)
- Proof 58: The inimitability of the Koran in form and content
- Proof 59: The Quran is the greatest miracle of the Prophet
- Proof 60: The wisdom of the Prophet
- Proof 61: The Koran contains no contradictions (Koran 4:82)
- Proof 62: Islam does not contradict Judaism or Christianity
- Proof 63: Muslims prostrate themselves like Jesus and the prophets
- Proof 64: Muslims fast like Jesus and the prophets
- Proof 65: They make pilgrimage like Jesus and the prophets
- Proof 66: Early Christian and Jewish women wore the veil
- Proof 67: The Koran describes the expansion of the universe (51:47)
- Proof 68: The Koran describes the roundness of the earth (39:5)
- Proof 69: Water is the origin of life (Koran 21, 30)
- Proof 70: Embryonic development (Koran 22, 5)
- Proof 71: The formation of cow's milk (Quran 16, 66)
- Proof 72: The orientation of bees (Koran 16, 68-69)

- Proof 73: The number of joints in the human body
Proof 74: The Koran does not contradict reason
Proof 75: The Koran never offends morality
Proof 76: The influence of Islam on thoughts (unitarianism
Proof 77: The influence of Islam on individuals (the case of Napoleon
Proof 78: The effect of the Koran on souls
Proof 79: The dazzling conquests of Islam in its early days
Proof 80: The contribution of Islamic civilization to nations
Proof 81: Islam is today the fastest spreading religion
Proof 82: And the first religion in the world before Catholicism
Proof 83: Muslims will outnumber Christians by 2070
Proof 84: Islam is a universal religion
Proof 85: The multiplication of conversions
Proof 86: The diversity of conversions
Proof 87: Islamophobes becoming Muslims
Proof 88: Feminists embracing Islam
Proof 89: Priests defrocked for Islam
Proof 90: Verses that blame the Prophet (Koran 80:1-11)
Proof 91: Long-awaited verses (Koran 24:11)
Proof 92: No one is a prophet in his own country
Proof 93: The Prophet was full of devotion in privacy
Proof 94: The Prophet's sincere faith and total surrender to God
Proof 95: His honesty even before the beginning of his mission
Proof 96: His compassion and kindness towards God's creatures
Proof 97: His renunciation of this world and his poverty
Proof 98: His humility and simplicity
Proof 99: The strictness of the obligations and prohibitions of Islam
Proof 100: Islam is the most fiercely fought religion

